METRO / A23

QC police keep Abra mayor's drug arrest secret for one week

NEWS / A2

Supreme Court upholds Vibal publishing textbook contract

ACROSS / A17

Palace : Fr. Eliseo Mercado not chief gov't negotiator, contrary to Dureza announcement

METRO / A24

'Bomb scare' on bus turns out to be month-old baby boy in blue bag

Geese get revenge: Paté may cause rare disease

PATAY KAYO SA PATE!

WASHINGTON—GEESE force-fed and then slaughtered for their livers may finally get their revenge on people who favor the delicacy known as foie gras: It may transmit a little-known disease

GEESE/ A12

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, June 20, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 192 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

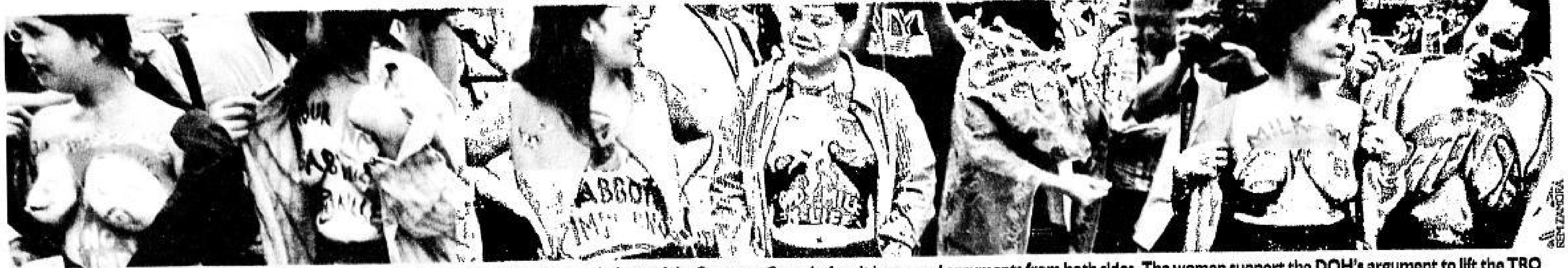
Mothers bare breasts, buck 'milk and murder'

By Tina G. Santos
and Leila B. Salaverria

THE WOMEN HAD SOMETHING TO GET OFF their chests and they did so by exposing their breasts.

At least 21 mothers did the unusual in front of the Supreme Court in Manila yesterday to show their support for the Department of

MOTHERS/ A6


REM ZAMORA

BREAST STROKE: In a master stroke, 21 women bare their breastfeeding advocacy in front of the Supreme Court before it hears oral arguments from both sides. The women support the DOH's argument to lift the TRO on the implementing rules of the Milk Code, which will, among other things, ban advertisements for mother's milk substitutes. Milk companies claim that an ad ban would restrict information on proper infant feeding.

Koko takes case to SC

Petition seeks to halt canvass of Maguindanao vote tallies

By Nikko Dizon and Jerome Aning, *in Manila*
and Jeoffrey Maitem, Ryan Rosauro, *Inquirer Mindanao*

HIS HOPES HANGING IN THE BALANCE, GENUINE OPPOSITION (GO) candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III said he was filing in the Supreme Court today a petition to stop the Commission on Elections from canvassing disputed vote tallies from Maguindanao, which could push Juan Miguel Zubiri of Team Unity (TU) past him in their battle for the last Senate slot.

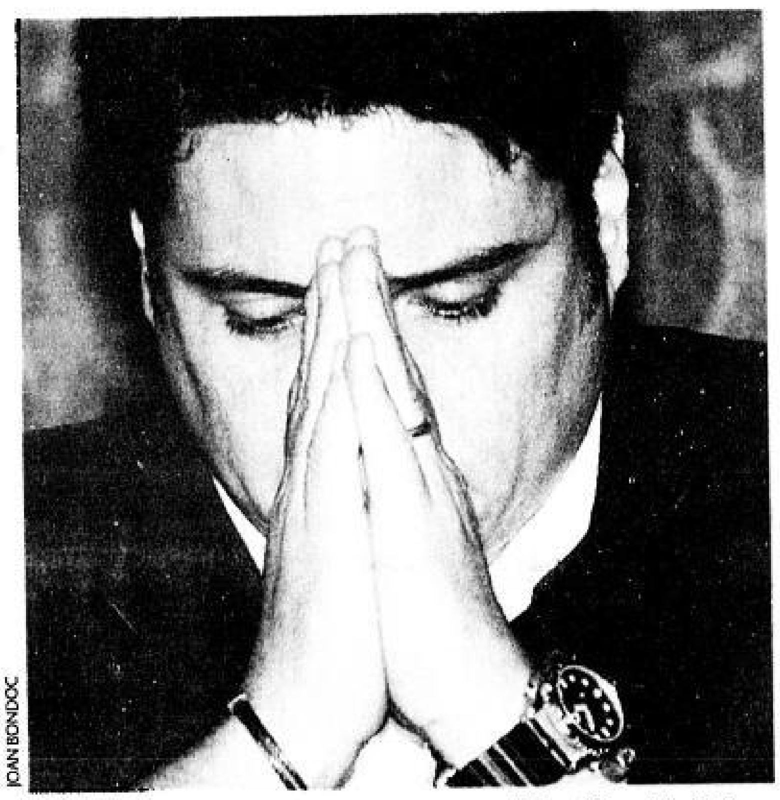
The filing of the petition would coincide with today's trip to General Santos City of a three-man Comelec panel led by Chair Benjamin Abalos for a meeting with Maguindanao poll officials on alleged vote fraud in the province during the May 14 elections.

Instead of going directly to Maguindanao, the Comelec panel has decided to meet with the province's 22 election officers and their provincial supervisor, Lintang Bedol, in General Santos City.

"We will ask the Supreme Court to prevent the Comelec from using for canvassing the figures they will get from any documents gathered from Maguindanao," Pimentel told the INQUIRER by phone. *(See related story on Page A2.)*

Pimentel said he doubted the veracity of whatever election documents the Comelec

KOKO/ A13


JOAN BONDOC

SO NEAR, BUT NOT QUITE IN: Senate candidate Miguel Zubiri in a prayerful mode at Team Unity's press conference in Quezon Cityy.

Esperon to invoke EO 464 in Trillanes summons

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Christian V. Esguerra

IT WON'T BE EASY FOR MILITARY-rebel-turned-senator Antonio Trillanes IV to summon Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. to any Senate inquiry.

Esperon yesterday said that if called to testify, he would invoke Executive Order No. 464 which bars Cabinet members from appearing before congressional inquiries without the approval of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"EO 464 is still in effect. I just have to follow the provision of that," the AFP chief of staff told reporters at a forum in Camp Crame, where he was repeatedly questioned on whether he would heed any summons for him to testify at Senate investigations, particularly Trillanes' planned inquiry into the political killings and disappearances under the Arroyo administration.

Esperon told reporters after the forum that, if ever, it should not be Trillanes but the Senate as a body that would request the executive branch for his appearance at an inquiry.

"It's not one senator calling the AFP chief of staff to the Senate for investiga-

ESPERON/ A8

Cabinet execs urge lenient handling of Trillanes

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Dona Pazzibugan

A GROUP OF CABINET OFFICIALS wants more "lenient" treatment for Oakwood Mutiny leader Antonio Trillanes IV now that he is about to join the 14th Congress as a senator.

"We don't want him to be a martyr. In the first place, he became popular because of the perception that he is being persecuted," a ranking Cabinet official told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The Cabinet official—who asked that he and the other members of his cluster not be named so as not to expose them to intrigue—said they even chided Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon when Trillanes was taken in handcuffs last week from his detention cell in Fort Bonifacio to the Commission on Elections office in Manila for his proclamation as the 11th of the 12 elected senators.

Trillanes, 35, managed the feat of winning a Senate seat despite an erratic low-budget campaign behind bars. As a Navy lieutenant, he was one of the "Magdalo" junior officers who led the daylong mutiny in July 2003 against graft and corruption in the government

CABINET/ A8

Gov't recalls Wyeth infant formula cans

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS HAS ordered the recall of millions of cans of infant formula products of a multinational company following reports that the cans were rusting and could be contaminated.

It was not clear, however, if the contents were contaminated because the BFAD had not received an answer from Wyeth, a US-based company.

But to be sure, the bureau is recalling about 2.5 million cans of infant formula brands Bona, Promil Kid, Promil and Progress Gold from the market, though it is still awaiting an official declaration from Wyeth on the exact number of affected cans, its deputy director, Joshua Ramos, told the INQUIRER.

Ramos said that what the BFAD was recalling were only certain "batches of production" and not all of the brands.

"We are not saying all of the brands are affected. There are only specific batches of production," he said. The specific batches are reflected in the date of manufacture.

Ramos said the BFAD would release a "public health advisory" identifying the batches of production to be recalled.

Last year, the Department of Health received reports of rust on the containers of

GOV'T/ A12

80% of teachers no ATM, suffer GSIS eCards

By Juan Miguel Luz
Contributor

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE Insurance System keeps missing the point when teachers, government employees and pensioners take it to task for its poor service.

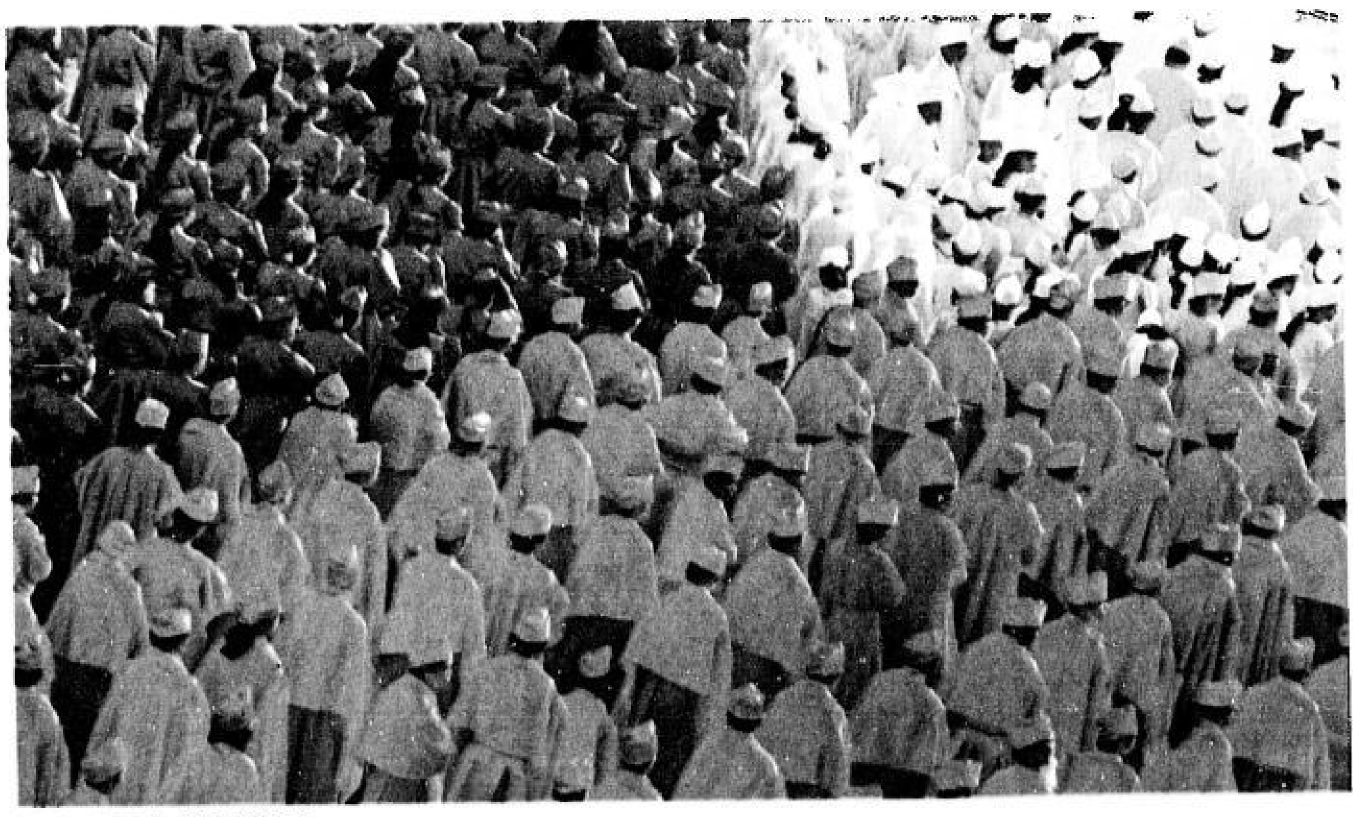
COMMENTARY

Take the controversial eCard, for example.

In 2003, the Department of Education's research showed that only 20 percent of all teachers lived within reach of an ATM (automated teller machine). Why then should we subject the remaining 80 percent to an eCard system when it is personally costly and inconvenient for them?

The common-sense approach would have been to issue eCards to teachers with access to ATMs while allowing the

80% OF TEACHERS/ A13



HERO FOR ALL TIME
A federation of various Rizalista groups nationwide form a human flag to pay tribute to the national hero on his 146th birthday at the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta on Tuesday. *(Story on Page A12.)*

RAFFY LERMA

Young duo wins silver, RP's 1st at Cannes ad fest

By Angel Guerrero
Contributor

CANNES, FRANCE—A PHILIPPINE TEAM has won the silver medal in the Young Creatives Competition of the world's largest and most prestigious advertising festival, with its creative ad showing children trying to play football amid the chaos of war, Cannes Lions announced.

The Philippine team from the ad agency Leo Burnett won the silver—the country's first after three years of participation—in the competition for the "Right to Play" charity print ad.

The under-28 duo of Carmela Advincula and Mignon Wilhelma Tobias, whose trip was sponsored by the AdBoard of the Philippines, competed against 35 teams representing the world's top young creative teams.

They were all required to develop the print ad, from briefing to execution, in less than 48 hours.

"(It) was a powerful demonstration of children's right to play sports during wartime. The way the logo was used as a ball in the execution made a difference," Bob Scarpelli, Cannes jury president for press and film and the chair and chief creative officer of DDB Worldwide, said of the ad from the Philippines.

Advincula and Tobias were surprised and happy with their win.

"We saw ads from other teams with a simi-

YOUNG DUO/ A12

EZ2
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SIX DIGIT
8 0 3 1 0 9

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
6 1 8 | 5 7 5
(All in exact order)

6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN
7 25 31 34 35 40
P34,437,171.60

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/06/19/07 SOURCE PAGASA

For Zubiri, fight for 12th slot is a harrowing ordeal

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Miguel Zubiri says he is mentally and emotionally exhausted from waiting for the final election results that would place either him or Genuine Opposition candidate Aquilino Pimentel III in the 12th slot in the list of winning senators.

"While the newly elected senators are taking vacations, I am still guarding my votes," Zubiri said at a press conference yesterday.

He said he has been visiting various churches and chapels, such as the Our Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan and the Pink Sisters in Tagaytay, to pray.

"I feel bad for my family and my wife for all the stress they have been going through," Zubiri said.

"I do not even answer my cell phone anymore because people asking about the status of the elections are adding to my emotional stress," he said.

Zubiri is hopeful that after the Commission on Elections examines the certificates of canvass from Maguindanao province today, he will finally be proclaimed as the 12th winning senator.

"When the votes from Maguindanao come in, I will lead Pimentel by 17,000 votes," Zubiri said.

He added that the COCs from Maguindanao have been with the Comelec since May 19.

"They cannot accuse us of manipulating the COCs to cover Pimentel's lead," he said.

Poll controversies in Maguindanao—including allegations that elections did not take place there or that CoCs were missing—have delayed the proclamation of the 12th winning senator.

Comelec officials are going to Maguindanao today to see if the special provincial board of canvassers could be reconstituted to tabulate the results for the province, which will be crucial in determining whether Zubiri or Pimentel will be proclaimed the 12th winning senator.

Maguindanao Rep. Simeon Datumanong, who was at the press conference, insisted that elections really did take place in his province.

"I even waited in line and was able to vote myself," Datumanong said.

"In fact, I was interviewed by the media before and after I voted," Datumanong said, adding that local and foreign observers could attest that the people of Maguindanao were able to exercise their right to suffrage.

Team Unity lawyer Romeo Macalintal stressed that the Comelec should exert all efforts before making any decision to exclude the Maguindanao CoCs. He said this would result in the massive disenfranchisement of the voters.

"We welcome the Comelec's decision to examine the election documents in the province. We are confident that when the Maguindanao votes are counted, Zubiri will be declared the winner," Macalintal said.

Datumanong also pointed out that the massive disenfranchisement of voters in Maguindanao would prejudice hundreds of thousands of Muslim voters.

They are entitled to see that their votes be counted," Datumanong said.

SC upholds Vibal textbook contract

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS affirmed the government's award of a $40-million World Bank-funded contract to two publishers involving 17.5 million Social Studies textbooks and manuals that was questioned by a losing bidder that claimed the bidding process was flawed.

In upholding the textbook deal awarded to Vibal Publishing House and Watana Phanit Printing & Publishing Co., the high court said the Manila Regional Trial Court could not stop the implementation of the contracts because complainant and losing bidder Kolonwel failed to follow proper procedures in its protest.

Kolonwel brought the suit against Vibal and Watana before the Manila Regional Trial Court, which ordered a halt to the implementation of the textbook contract.

Watana, although impleaded, did not participate in the case.

Kolonwel said the Vibal consortium had published error-filled textbooks in the past and should have been disqualified from participating in biddings for the printing of textbooks again.

But Vibal, as well as the Department of Education and the Department of Budget and Management, elevated the case to the Supreme Court which issued a temporary restraining order enjoining the Manila court from stopping the implementation of the textbook contract, paving the way for the delivery of the books to the public schools.

'Lame' reason

In its decision, the high court said Kolonwel disregarded the protest mechanism spelled out in the Government Procurement Reform Act, or Republic Act No. 9184, when it questioned the decision of the Inter-Agency Bids and Awards Committee (IABAC). It added that Kolonwel gave a "lame" reason for not following the rules.

RA 9184 states that there must be a protest in the form of a verified position paper, the protest must be submitted to the head of the procuring entity, and a protest fee must be paid.

It also states that the courts could only take cognizance of suits arising from biddings after the protest procedure had been completed.

Kolonwel yesterday said the Supreme Court decision was a blow against good governance.

Kolonwel lawyer Harry Roque said he disagreed with the high tribunal's ruling that Kolonwel did not follow the protest mechanism.

He said there were no implementing rules and regulations (IRR) he could follow.

He said the high court also erred when it stated that the rules of a foreign lending institution [World Bank] should prevail over local laws when it came to projects financed by foreign loans.

'They are wrong'

"How are we going to have competent bidding? It is good governance that will suffer," he said. "With all due respect, they are wrong."

Roque said he would "definitely" file a motion for reconsideration in the Supreme Court.

Make up your mind on revamp, GMA told

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD MAKE UP her mind quickly about the announced overhaul of the cabinet and government-owned corporations because the issue is "confusing the business sector," Sen. Mar Roxas said yesterday.

"Uncertainty is the enemy of business. Speculation is the enemy of sound economic policy," said Roxas in a press conference of the Liberal Party held at the Senate.

Roxas, a former secretary of trade and industry, said the President's "hazy" policy was bad for business and gave the impression that the government was in disarray after its embarrassing defeat in the last election.

He said financial market leaders here and abroad "are wondering what the situation is and who their counterparts would be dealing with, negotiating with, and transacting with."

"I think the mixed announcements show the administration is in disarray; worse, it is self inflicted. It's a disservice to government," said Roxas yesterday.

Earlier, reports from Malacañang said a complete revamp could be expected. Later, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita stressed that only heads of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) have been asked to submit their resignations to give the President a free hand in the reorganization.

SUBIC BAY TAIWAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

We the members of Subic Bay Taiwan Chamber of Commerce would like to appeal to Her Excellency to intervene in the on-going conflict relative to the abrupt and unprecedented take over of the leased premises of SUBIC BAY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB, INC. (SBGCC)

SBGCC is among the pioneer investor of SBMA. Among the 300 locators who invested, it is among the 40 remaining.

The take-over befuddles us considering that no case was filed against SBGCC. The take over violated every basic law of diplomacy. We are now afraid same thing may be done to us.

We continue to pursue our commitment to make Subic Bay Freeport Zone as an investment haven for Taiwanese and other foreign locators.

SUBIC BAY TAIWAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERS

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Fang Chan Inc.
Jeffrey Chien

Chung Nan Textile Co Ltd
Paul Gan

Lin Gee Inc
Leo Lin

LTW Technology (Subic) Int'l
Peter Chen

Elltong Subic Inc
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Subic Bay Golf & Country Club
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Hsin Key World Mercantile Inc.
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Kyan Gon

Taiwan Valiant Mfg. Inc.
Danny Wung

UJ Corp:
Clement Yu

Sapphire Instruments Subic Bay Inc.
Hsu Kuang Jung

Shenkai Corporation Simon Tsai
Simon Tsai

Chinatrust (Phils) Commercial Bank Corp.
Jack Lee

Winstar Subic Display Co. Ltd.
Brian Lin

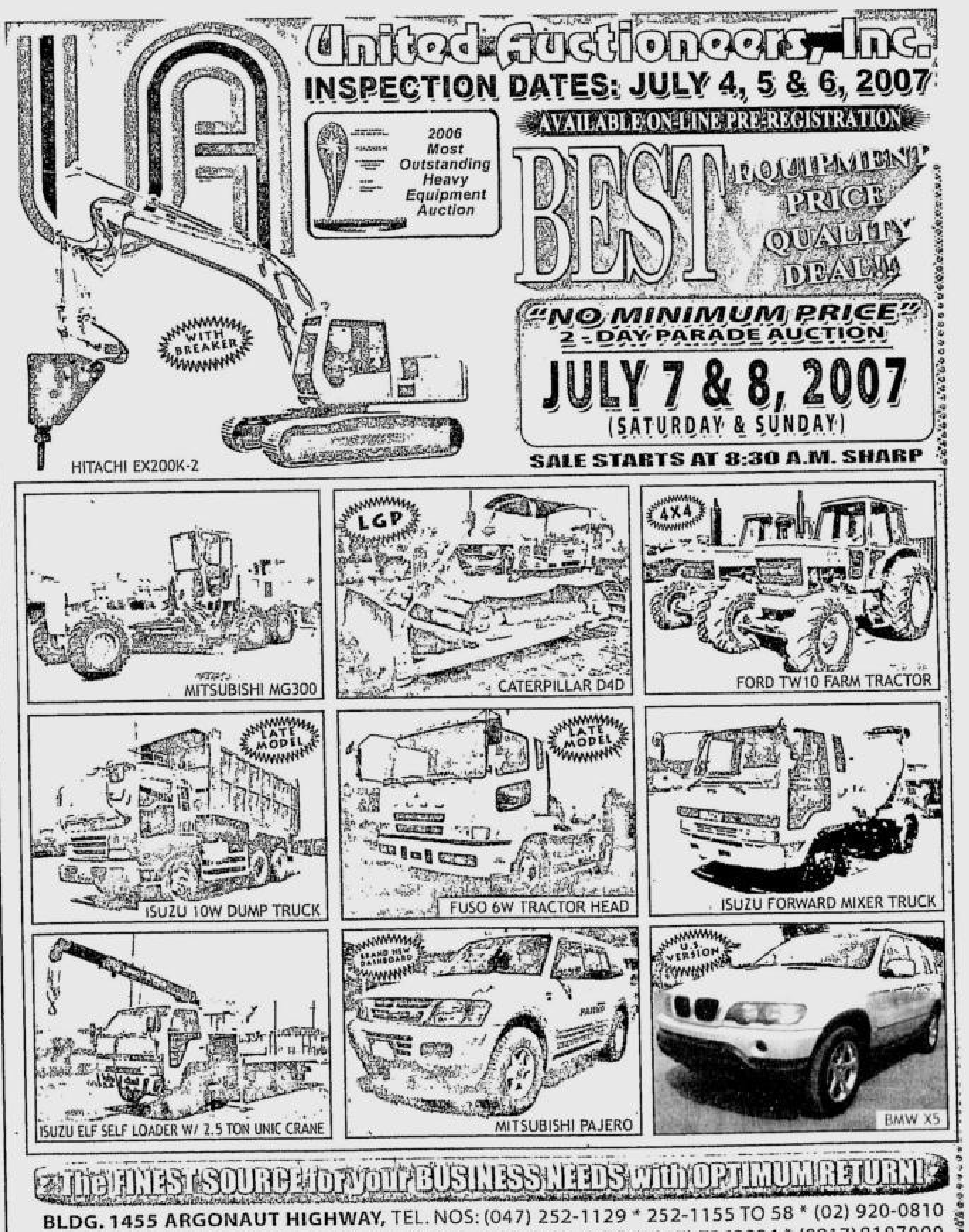
GVC (Philippines) Corporation
Lin Hsinfa

Ouplus Plastic Industrial Inc.
Sung Chiung-An

Yi-Phonr Subic Bay Corp.
Raymond Liu

Hwah Sheng Incorporation
Lin-Hsiang Chin

Coin Chemical
David Lin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Now, Erap wants permission to go to Lim's oath-taking

DETAINED FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA yesterday asked permission from the Sandiganbayan to attend the oath-taking of Manila Mayor-elect Alfredo Lim, who had invited the deposed leader to the June 30 rites at the Liwasang Bonifacio.

Estrada counsel Rene Saguisag who filed the motion, noted that Lim "acknowledges a debt of gratitude" to the 70-year-old Estrada, who strongly endorsed Lim's candidacy in the May 14 elections.

Saguisag attached Lim's June 5 letter inviting Estrada, who was held under house arrest at his Tanay, Rizal, vacation estate on a P4.1-billion plunder charge.

The ceremony was set at midday of June 30, Saturday, with Lim's oath to be administrated by Chief Justice Reynato Puno, according to the invitation.

"This is merely a small gesture on my part compared to what you have done to my present political career. If I could have your presence, it would certainly make my inauguration as Mayor of the City of Manila not only memorable but also complete," Lim told Estrada in the letter.

Lim served as interior secretary during Estrada's short-lived presidency.

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JUNE 28, 2007 THURSDAY	JUNE 29, 2007 FRIDAY	JUNE 30, 2007 SATURDAY
NEGOSYO SESSION AREA 1		
9am-10:30am Negosyo Session For Carinderia **COCA-COLA**	9am-10:30am How To Make Your Menu More Nutricious **DATU PUTI**	9am-10:30am How to make more profit in your HORECA Business - **SAFI**
11am-12pm Grocery **NESTLE**-gosyo Session	11am-12pm Grocery **NESTLE**-gosyo Session	11am-12pm Grocery **NESTLE**-gosyo Session
1pm-2:30pm Food, Safety & Hygiene in your HORECA Business **DATU PUTI**	2pm-3pm Food Service Negosyo Session **NESTLE**	2pm-3pm Food Service Negosyo Session **NESTLE**
3pm-5pm Grocery and Food Service Negosyo Session **NESTLE**	4pm-5pm Negosyo Session **PUREFOODS** **SAN MIGUEL CORP.**	4pm-5pm **CDO** Challenge
5:30pm-7pm Negosyo Session for Carinderia **COCA-COLA**	5:30pm-7pm **CENTURY** Culinary Circle Kusina **ARGENTINA** Cooking Club	5:30pm-7pm Negosyo Session For Carinderia **COCA-COLA**
NEGOSYO SESSION AREA 3		
9am-10:30am PWEDE NA The Complete Guide to Personal Financing - EFREN CRUZ - **GREPALIFE**	9am-9:30am Baking Demo **SAN MIGUEL CORP.**	9am-10:30am Basketball Power Camp Special Edition for Makro Members **ALASKA**
11am-1:30pm Makronomics Session **UNILEVER**	10:30am-12pm Makronomics Session **UNILEVER**	10:30am-11:30am **BANKARD** versus Cash Purchases
2pm-4pm Wagi-Wagi sa Sari-Sari **COLGATE PALMOLIVE**	1pm-2pm Tabo-Tabo, Timba-Timba at Batya-Batyang Pangkabuhayan **3J PLASTIC WORLD**	11:30am-1pm PWEDE NA The Complete Guide to Personal Financing - EFREN CRUZ - **GREPALIFE**
5:30pm-6pm Tipid at Lakas ng Negosyo Sagot ng **ALASKA**	2:30pm-4:30pm **DODO** is Negosyo **PTC COMMERCIAL CORP**	1pm-3pm **UNILEVER** Makronomics Session
	5pm-6pm Cooking Demo **Thai Agri**	4pm-5pm Meet & Greet **SAN MIGUEL CORP.**

JUNE 28, 2007 THURSDAY	JUNE 29, 2007 FRIDAY	JUNE 30, 2007 SATURDAY
NEGOSYO SESSION AREA 2		
9am-10:30am EXCLUSIVE FGD (by invitation only) **J&J**	9:30am-10:30am Wagi-Wagi sa Sari-Sari **COLGATE - PALMOLIVE**	9am-10:30am Negosyo Session For Carinderia **COCA-COLA**
11am-12:30pm Business Solution for Todays Entrepreneurs **GLOBE TELECOM**	12pm-2pm Dress up your Tindahan Merchandising Session **UNILEVER**	10:30am-12pm Merchandising Session **UNILEVER**
1pm-2:30pm Dress up your Tindahan Merchandising Session **UNILEVER**	2:30pm-4pm PWEDE NA The Complete Guide to Personal Financing - EFREN CRUZ - **GREPALIFE**	1pm-2:30pm Dagdag Negosyo para sa Inyo handog ng **GREPALIFE**
4pm-5pm Cooking Demo **SAN MIGUEL**		3pm-5pm White King Products Cooking Demo **RFM Corp.**
5:30pm-6pm Nutrition for Better Healthcare **UNITED PET FOOD**	5:30pm-6pm Dogfood for Care or Toxins **UNITED PET FOOD**	5:30pm-6pm Values of Pet Nutrition **UNITED PET FOOD**
SPECIAL EVENTS AREA		
9am-10am OPENING CEREMONY (by invitation)	9:30am-12:30pm Makro Cooking Competition w/ Mascot Appearance **NESTLE**	9:30am-12:30pm Makro Cooking Competition w/ Mascot Appearance **NESTLE**
10am-1pm Cooking Demo **AJI-NO-MOTO**	1pm-2:30pm Cooking Demo featuring Thailand's Top Celebrity Chef Mr. Walter Lee **VENTURETEC**	1pm-4:30pm Presentation w/ Celebrities **NESCAFE**
1:30pm-3pm Presentation w/ Celebrities **NESCAFE**	3pm-5pm Presentation w/ Celebrities **NESCAFE**	5pm-7pm Bartending Championship
3:30pm-5pm 101 Ways of Preparing Chicken **BOUNTY FRESH CHICKEN**	5:30pm-7pm Bartending Eliminations	
5:30pm-7pm Bartending Eliminations		

Bounty Fresh chicken
Nestle
Knorr
Surf
Coca-Cola
Procter&Gamble
SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION
COLGATE-PALMOLIVE
ALASKA
DATU PUTI
PHILIP MORRIS

Store Location	CDM	Cell.No.	Tel.No.	Store Location	CDM	Cell.No.	Tel.No.
Cainta	Jeanne	0917-820-3201	(02) 656-7451	Batangas	Marianne	0917-820-3209	(043) 722-1611
Imus	Lenie	0917-820-3202	(043) 515-2222	CDO	Abby	0917-820-3210	(088) 858-1356
Novaliches	Lea	0917-891-3203	(02) 936-2624	Iloilo	Mereuel	0917-820-3211	(033) 329-2701
Sucat	Ming	0917-820-3204	(02) 850-6570	Cubao	Mario	0917-820-3212	(02) 911-8113
Harbour Centre	Vince	0917-820-3205	(02) 256-3106	Las Piñas	Elvie	0917-820-3213	(02) 874-9266
Cebu	Jess	0917-820-3206	(032) 345-9540	Makati	Darwin	0917-820-3214	(02) 887-7413
Davao	Edgar	0917-820-3207	(082) 298-3560	Mandaluyong	Reisan	0917-820-3215	(02) 535-7217
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BI unit pulled out of Naia

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION has dissolved its monitoring and enforcement unit at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport because of reports that immigration employees were conspiring with syndicates in human trafficking.

The 20-man monitoring team was replaced by a newly created Migration Compliance and Monitoring Group composed of 31 employees, most of whom came from other immigration units within the international airport, technical staff chief to the commissioner Ferdinand Arbas told the INQUIRER.

In a statement, the bureau said the disbandment of the unit was an offshoot of "complaints about the alleged involvement of its members in facilitating the departure of undocumented overseas Filipino workers and their supposed connivance with human trafficking syndicates."

Arbas said the unit members would return to their mother units, also within the airport, but they would no longer be involved in the intelligence information services of the dissolved unit.

He said members of the new team had been screened and investigated. He also said they were all told to see to it that the escort service would be stopped.

There had been numerous reports of immigration employees escorting undocumented workers for a fee so they could walk past the immigration checkers and slip out of the country.

To address this, members of the new team as well as the counter checkers would be rotated daily.

They would also be banned from using mobile phones and other means of communication while on duty, while those off duty would be banned from loitering in the airport's immigration areas.

Still not addressed, however, are complaints against immigration employees who treat returning overseas workers harshly.

The bureau is predicting a sharp increase in the number of travelers this year "with the continuing improvement of the economy and the influx of tourists into the country."

METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS & SEWERAGE SYSTEM
REGULATORY OFFICE

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

There will be a public consultation on the proposed Sea Transport rate of Maynilad Water Services Inc. this Wednesday, June 20, 2007, 8 a.m.-12 noon, at the Aristocrat Restaurant, Roxas Blvd., Manila.

Corrections

IN THE JUNE 13 ISSUE, Recah Trinidad's "Bare Eye" column on Page A26 of the Sports section—"Angry Pacman stars in Arum play"—misspelled the name of a Manila Bulletin writer. He is Nick Giongco—not Giongo.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 15 ISSUE, a front-page story—"GMA to media: Gov't to end killings, libel suits"—misspelled the name of the chief of Task Force Usig. He is Police Director Geary—not Gerry—Barias.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 16 ISSUE, a front-page story—"No accuser, no head-bashing at Sandigan"—misspelled the name of Bayan Muna's secretary general. He is Nathanael—not Nathaniel—Santiago.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 17 ISSUE, the editorial on Page A12 of the Opinion section—"Kowtow"—misstated the name of a senator-elect. He is Senator-elect Antonio Trillanes IV—not III.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 18 ISSUE, an article on Page A7—"Lacson raps antilaundering body over freeze"—misstated that daily transactions involving P500,000 or more are considered "suspicious." Under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, such transactions are called "covered transactions."

* * *

IN THE JUNE 19 ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"No rains yet, but typhoon expected"—inaccurately stated that the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration forecast a typhoon for Saturday. Actually, Pagasa officials saw no typhoon coming until Saturday.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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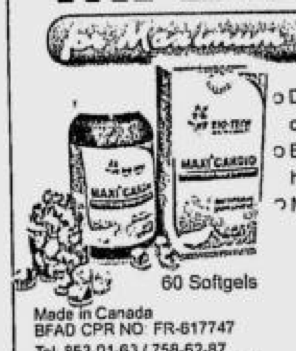

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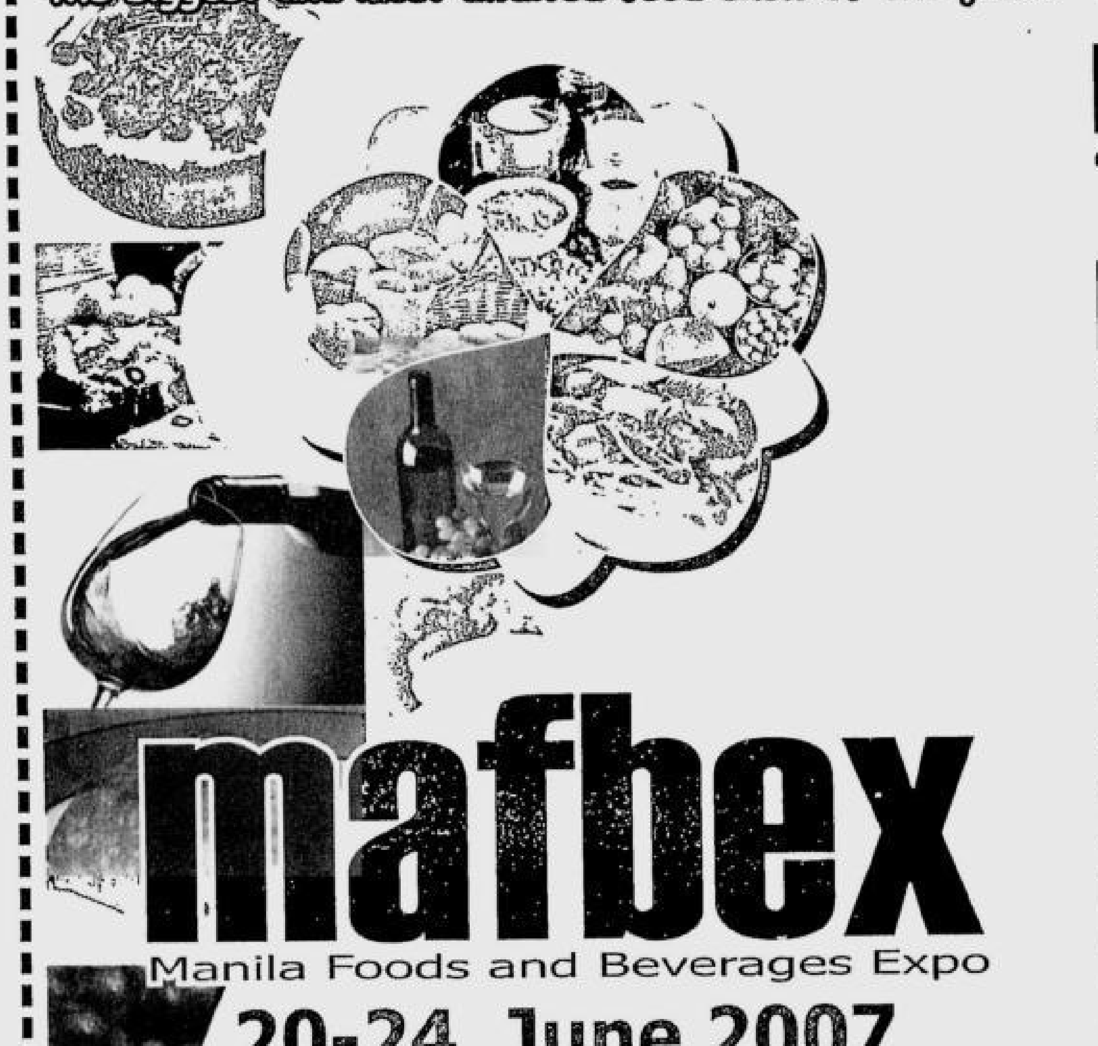

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Kiko won't go along with LP in Senate race

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE LIBERAL PARTY'S BID TO FORM A formidable bloc in the Senate was stymied yesterday after its self-styled independent member, Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, refused to go along with the party's choice for Senate President.

Pangilinan is believed to be supporting the incumbent, Manuel Villar, his ally in the Wednesday Group, against the LP's choice who is believed to be Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

"Ideally, it would be best to unite the party around a common (candidate) but certain realities come into play making that difficult. But we are endeavoring to unite," Pangilinan said.

The other member of the Wednesday Group is Sen. Joker Arroyo who is with the administration. Vice President Noli de Castro was a member when he was in the Senate and so was Ralph Recto until he lost in his recent reelection bid.

LP Senators Mar Roxas, Rodolfo Biazon and Benigno Aquino III confirmed they would be casting a common vote during the caucus of 10 other opposition senators on Friday that would decide between Villar and Pimentel.

The three are expected to vote for Pimentel since Villar is seen as a potential rival to Roxas for the presidency in 2010.

Biazon declined to comment on Pangilinan's refusal to go along with the LP's choice. "We will talk about it," was all he would say.

"We will participate even without Kiko. We will be voting as a bloc. It's just a question how large that bloc is," Roxas said.

Outsider

Pangilinan defended his stand by saying the secret balloting on Friday would be participated in exclusively by Genuine Opposition candidates and he was afraid he would be tagged an outsider.

But by opting not to vote with the LP, Pangilinan could be helping Villar retain his post.

"I just look at the bigger picture. Both are with the opposition; it's not a big deal," he said.

Ironically, Pangilinan made his statements at the LP's press conference where he said the party wanted to move away from "debates on personalities in choosing the Senate leader" and instead adopt a seven-point agenda that would be the basis for choosing the next Senate President.

The LP's "People First" agenda seeks to 1) place more money in the pockets of workers without raising wages; 2) develop better minds and bodies for young Filipinos; 3) push for real social reform, affordable medicines, OFW benefits and consumer protection; 4) establish economic partnerships based on social issues; 5) put criminals in jail; 6) treat soldiers with honor, and 7) sustain economic freedom for farmers.

Abu, JI likely to top list of terror groups

By Alcuin Papa

THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP AND ITS Indonesia-based ally, the Jemaah Islamiyah, are likely to land on top of a list of terror organizations once the Human Security Act goes into effect next month.

"We can safely say they will be on the list," Director General Oscar Calderon of the Philippine National Police told reporters at Camp Crame yesterday.

The Human Security Act, otherwise known as the Antiterrorism Law, mandates security agencies to come up with a list of terror organizations to be neutralized.

"What they have done, their participation (in terror activities) is already known. Some of them are already on our wanted list," Calderon said.

As for the communist New People's Army, Calderon said the NPA, as well as groups serving as its "fronts," would have to meet the criteria set by the new law to escape the list.

Best reference

While the PNP is preparing for the implementation of the law, Calderon said the Revised Penal Code was still the best reference for crimes against the state.

Critics of the new law said it violated human rights. But Calderon countered that it contained enough safeguards protecting civil rights.

The Abu Sayyaf has been responsible for bombings in Mindanao and Metro Manila. It was also behind the abduction of Filipinos and foreign nationals.

Its allies, the Jemaah Islamiyah, have been linked to the international terror network of Osama bin Laden, the man behind the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

The NPA, for its part, is said to number 7,000 guerrillas who are waging the longest communist insurgency in Asia.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING

GMA backs freeze of dubious funds

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday upheld the decision of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) freezing last month some P1.21 billion in bank funds suspected of coming from illegal sources.

Speaking through her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, President Arroyo said freezing suspicious funds was in accordance with the law.

Under Republic Act No. 9160, the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001, daily transactions involving P500,000 or more are considered "suspicious" and the financial institutions are mandated to report the transactions to the council for investigation. AMLC Executive Director Vicente Aquino said there was an increase in these "suspicious" transactions last May, an election month.

"The Palace is supportive of AMLC's efforts to effectively implement the AMLA (Anti Money-Laundering Act)," said Bunye at a press briefing.

Bunye was reacting to Sen. Panfilo Lacson's pronouncement over the weekend condemning the AMLC for freezing funds during the election period, charging that it smacked of political persecution.

"Although the AMLC has the power to do that (freeze the accounts), may I remind it of the provision in the law that safeguards it against being used as a tool for political persecution during or after the election period," said Lacson, one of the principal authors of AMLA.

He then advised Aquino to "review the law and take the necessary steps to correct this mistake of freezing these accounts."

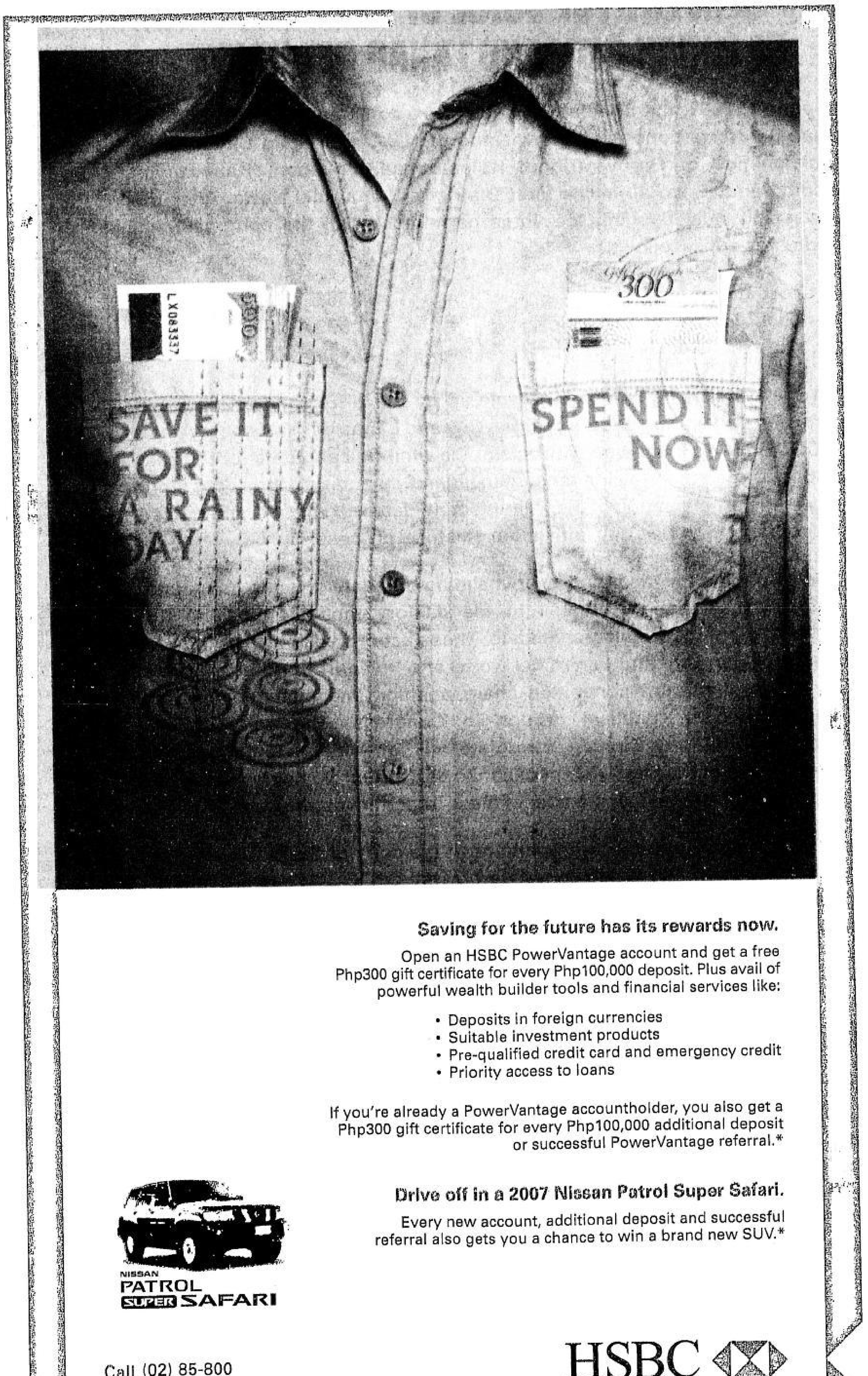
Lacson said it was "quite understandable" for transactions to exceed the P500,000 threshold during an election period due to the campaign funding requirements of candidates.

But Bunye said the Palace further "recognizes and respects the AMLC's independence and fully supports the latter's efforts to discharge its mandate under the AMLA as the country's financial intelligence unit."

The AMLC said that of the frozen amount, P1.075 billion was denominated in pesos, while the equivalent of P129.97 million was in US dollars. About P24,002 more was in Japanese yen.

As of end-May, according to the AMLC report, there were 8,520 "suspicious" transactions reported to the council.

BUNYE



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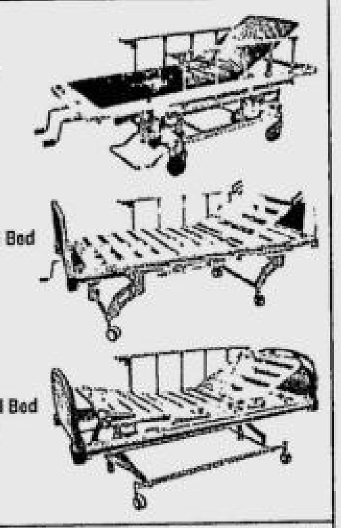

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Mothers bare breasts, buck 'milk and murder'

From page A1

Health's strict regulation on infant formula milk advertisements.

Holding up posters showing a mother feeding her malnourished baby with an infant milk formula, the demonstrators displayed their breasts painted with slogans, such as "yes to breast-feeding," "infant formula dangerous" and "milk and malnutrition."

Other moms had their breasts painted with portraits of a malnourished child.

The demonstrators—members of the Arugaan Foundation and Save the Babies Coalition—gave Manila policemen guarding the Supreme Court the slip as they slammed pharmaceutical and milk companies for advertising breast milk substitutes.

Oral arguments

The lightning rally happened at around 11:30 a.m., a few hours before the Supreme Court heard the oral arguments on the Milk Code, which has been temporarily held in abeyance because of objections from milk companies.

The code bans advertisements for breast milk substitutes intended for infants and children up to 2 years old.

Milk companies argued that the code curtailed international trade and marketing agreements.

The Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) has sued the DOH, arguing that only Congress has the power to change regulations. The PHAP includes US-based infant formula companies Wyeth, Mead Johnson Nutritionals and Abbott Laboratories.

The Supreme Court initially backed the DOH, but on appeal, it ordered a halt to the stiffer rules, which also call for stricter labeling and sanctions on companies that do not comply.

The current regulations ban companies from promoting products for infants younger than a year old.

The health department wants the temporary restraining order lifted, saying that the Milk Code is intended to arrest the decline in breast-feeding.

Breast-feeding rates dip

"We have seen a dramatic decrease of our breast-feeding rates. We have seen an increase of the profits and sale of infant formula companies," Health Undersecretary Alexander Padilla said.

Exclusive breast-feeding rates during the first four to five months dipped from 20 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2003 in the Philippines, where more women with disposable income are working full-time and juggling busy lifestyles like many women in the West.

Ines Fernandez, executive director of Arugaan, claimed that about 16,000 babies died each year due to malnutrition. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates up to 1.45 million children die annually in poor countries because of low breast-feeding rates.

Infant deaths

Fernandez said the deaths could be attributed to malnutrition and other illnesses brought about by milk formulas. "This is milk and murder," she said.

She said mothers were made to believe by milk companies that artificial milk was the best option, next to breast-feeding, in order to meet the nutritional needs of babies.

The protesters supported DOH efforts to remove milk ads from media, saying the proliferation of the commercials was a "form of massacre."

"These advertisements for breast milk substitutes say that children will become geniuses, which is not true. The truth is children develop illnesses, such as asthma and diarrhea, because of infant milk formulas. The best milk for babies is breast milk," Fernandez said.

DOH overstepping?

In the Supreme Court, Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera contended that the DOH was well within its authority to promulgate rules that support its responsibility to attain the highest standard of health for the Filipino child.

PHAP lawyer Felicitas Arroyo said the milk companies under the association were not against breast-feeding because they believed it to be the "gold standard" when it came to infant nutrition.

"This is not a battle between breast-feeding advocacy and the milk industry. We are challenging the arrogant practice ... of exercising powers not given to them," she said during oral arguments about the code's revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

Arroyo said the DOH's revised milk code rules violated the separation between the executive and legislative branches of the government.

Subliminal messages

The prohibition was imposed because, according to the text of the rules, the advertisements and promotions tend to convey subliminal messages that undermine breast milk and breast-feeding, or exaggerate the breast milk substitutes.

Arroyo said that in handing down the new rules, the DOH expanded, modified or amended the scope of the Milk Code or Executive Order No. 51, which only covers infants up to 12 months old, to cover children up to 2 years old.

She said that only Congress could expand or amend the code's coverage. "The DOH, notwithstanding the purity of its intentions, simply can't legislate," she said.

She also said the code's revised IRR hampered the public's right to information and encroached on its freedom to choose between breast feeding and infant formula.

Breast-feeding is not always the best choice for all babies, according to the PHAP lawyer, herself a mother.

She said that one study had shown that prolonged breast feeding could lead to diminished nutrition.

Losses of P10 billion

Arroyo also pointed out that the revised IRR would lead to losses of about P10 billion for milk companies.

But Justice Angelina Sandoval Gutierrez asked why the milk companies were more concerned about the loss of their profits.

She also wondered why the milk companies questioned the revised rules if they thought highly of breast milk.

"If you recognized breast milk as the gold standard ... then why are you complaining about the IRR for milk substitutes for young children?" Gutierrez asked.

Justice Consuelo Ynares Santiago also said that if breast milk was the best, then there should also be no objection to the promotion of exclusive breast-feeding for infants up to 6 months old.

Arroyo said the milk companies wanted to recoup their losses, "but never at the expense of infants and children."

She also said the PHAP contested the revised rules of the Milk Code because they did not fall within the scope of the Milk Code.

As for the false nutritional claims of infant formula advertisements, Arroyo said the alleged misinformation was an "unfair accusation."

Between 1986-2006

The PHAP lawyer warned against equating non-breast-feeding with the automatic use of infant formula, which she said was inaccurate because aside from infant formula, other breast-milk substitutes were used by mothers.

Justice Renato Corona asked why a law was needed for the DOH to issue regulations to protect the health of infants. The administrative code states that the function of the DOH is to promote the health of people and regulate the providers of health care, goods and services, he pointed out.

"Is it not enough authority for the DOH?" Corona said.

He also noted that the Milk Code was signed in 1986 and the revised rules handed down in 2006. In the 20-year gap, he said many discoveries about breast feeding had been found.

"So what is wrong with the DOH issuing administrative regulations filling in the void between the scientific knowledge in 2006 and the pitiful ignorance in 1986?" he said.

Contamination

For his part, Justice Presbitero Velasco noted that breast milk had been found to be the best for infants, and maybe even for adults. His remark elicited laughter from the audience.

Velasco also said infant formula could be contaminated because there was no technology yet that would ensure that the product was 100-percent safe.

As for the power of the DOH to expand the Milk Code, he said that when interpreting a law, the spirit and intent of the statute were given weight. He added that the intention of the Milk Code was to regulate breast milk substitutes when necessary.

Chief justice

Chief Justice Reynato Puno for his part said the power of the DOH to formulate rules came from three sources—the legislation of Congress, international covenants, and the police power of the state.

Illustrating the DOH's police power, he said that if the department would find rotten milk being sold, it had the power to take it out of the market.

Devanadera told the justices that the DOH was fulfilling its duty to safeguard Filipino children's health when it formulated the revised implementing rules and regulations for the Milk Code.

She said the advertising ban on breast milk substitutes was intended to promote breast-feeding culture.

"Advertising breast-feeding substitutes has no other purpose than to displace breast-feeding and increase dependence on formula milk ... It is disadvantageous to the child," she said.

US intervention

The row has prompted the Washington-based US Chamber of Commerce to intervene. Its chief sent a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo urging her to reexamine the DOH plan or risk the country's "reputation as a stable and viable destination for investment."

The WHO recommends the mothers nurse exclusively for the first six months and continue providing breast milk along with complementary foods until age 2.

Research has shown that babies given breast milk develop fewer respiratory and intestinal diseases, and those given formula have a greater chance of developing asthma or allergies later in life, along with obesity.

RESPECT THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE
OF ILIGAN CITY AND LANAO DEL NORTE

On June 1, 2007, the Special Provincial Board of Canvasser (SPBOC) of Lanao del Norte concluded canvassing the CoC's of Iligan City and the Municipalities of Baroy, Tubod, Kolambugan, Linamon, Kauswagan, Bacolod and Maigo all in the First District of Lanao del Norte. After the canvassing was finished, the votes garnered by all the congressional candidates are as follows:

Governor Imelda Q. Dimaporo = 61,363
Councilor Vicente Belmonte, Jr. = 53,599
Atty. Angeline Dawn B. Bacareza = 40,498

With the canvassing of votes completed by the SPBOC, We, the peace loving and god fearing people of Iligan City and Lanao del Norte hereby ask the COMELEC to immediately proclaim the winning candidate for the said position to ease the brewing tension in Iligan City and Province. Any more delay in the proclamation of the winning candidate will only disenfranchise the people from having any faith in our electoral process.

Notwithstanding the clear and overwhelming mandate given to candidate, the losing candidate continues to file dilatory motions blocking the proclamation of the winning candidate. These actions will only deprive the people of Iligan City and Lanao del Norte of a voice in Congress. At this early stage, important committee chairmanships and memberships are being decided by political groups in Congress. The delay in the proclamation of the winning candidate will only deprive the elected representative of the First District of Lanao del Norte from being nominated as Committee Chairman or member of these important committees'.

They argue that there are discrepancies in the copy of the CoC's held by the minority party and those canvassed by the SPBOC. These arguments are untenable to defer the proclamation of the winning candidate because such controversies are within the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal. The HRET is the constitutional body created by law mandated to resolve such issues.

We, therefore, appeal to the COMELEC to immediately PROCLAIM the winning candidate of the First District of Lanao del Norte based on ALL the canvassed CoC's of the province. The people of Lanao del Norte has already spoken and given its mandate to its representative. It is now the duty of the COMELEC to respect the voice of the people.

Governor Imelda Q. Dimaporo can further strengthen the understanding and unity of Muslims and Christians. She can help strengthen the moral fiber of our society. She can give us peace and development. All these we saw her do in Lanao del Norte over her three terms as Governor.

From the:

Concerned Citizens of Iligan City and Lanao del Norte
Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Lanao del Norte
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Youth Leaders

ADVT

TOP BRASS. Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and National Police Director Gen. Oscar Calderon swap "highfives" during yesterday's forum at Camp Crame. JOAN BONDOC

US troops not fighting in South – Esperon

By Alcuin Papa

AMERICAN TROOPS ARE NOT CONDUCTING combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao, contrary to the reports of former US Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North who is now a correspondent for the Fox News network.

The assertion was made by Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon at a media forum at Camp Crame yesterday.

"They (US troops) are not directly involved in combat operations," Esperon said, nor were American and Filipino troops going to combat "side-by-side" against the Abu Sayyaf.

"They (Americans) have their own base. They are conducting technical work and civil military operations," Esperon said.

In his reports over Fox News, North said he had "embedded" himself with US troops conducting joint training exercises with Filipino soldiers.

Counterterror operation

In his introduction of North for a broadcast, Fox News host Sean Hannity said North was covering "a major counterterror operation on a joint Philippine and US special advisers task force in the hunt for the Islamic terror group Abu Sayyaf."

North wrote of his coverage: "The 'job' for less than 160 US Special Operations personnel here at what they call 'Advanced Operating Base 150' is to 'advise and assist' the Filipinos in their fight against the ASG. For these Americans, who are from the most elite units in the US military and used to doing the fighting themselves, this is a very tough mission."

The Constitution prohibits foreign troops fighting on Philippine soil.

North, who was embroiled in the Iran-Contra scandal in the US in the '80s where funds from clandestine arms sales to Iran went to fund the Nicaraguan Contras, has been in the Philippines the past two weeks doing a documentary on counterterrorism.

In an interview with reporters at Camp Crame on Monday, North said the Philippines was "doing good" in its war against global terrorism.

Besides being host of "War Stories" on Fox News, North is a nationally syndicated columnist.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon said he was elated by North's comments.

"It's good someone appreciates what we are doing. We definitely thank him for his comments," Calderon told reporters yesterday.

US intervention

But militant groups said North's reports were meant to justify US intervention in the country.

The left-leaning fisherfolk alliance Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said yesterday it would rather see Hollywood director Oliver Stone in the country doing a documentary on US military intervention in the Philippines instead of North who would be "praising Washington for its counterterrorism involvement in the country."

Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Albert Corpuz said in a statement North's reports were "nothing but a political advertisement aimed at convincing the American people to support President Bush's war against terror and justify the conversion of the Philippines into imperialist America's second front against global terrorism."

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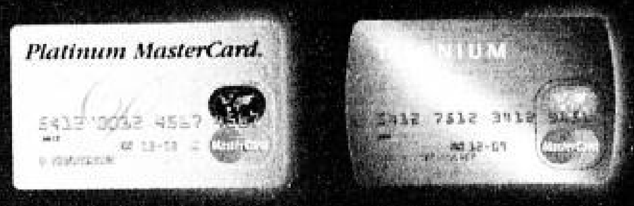

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Esperon to invoke EO 464 to Trillanes summons

From page A1

tions. It should be an official communication to the executive department because that's the way it works. After all, I have a chain of command to respect," he said, adding:

"This is not a fight between Senator Trillanes and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. We simply have to follow the rule of law, the procedures, because they are all there. If we do not do that, who else would follow rules and regulations?"

Questions first

Esperon said that "under the existing rules," the questions to be asked by lawmakers conducting the inquiry would have to be submitted early on to the executive branch.

"We have to know the purpose [of the investigation]," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued EO 464 in September 2006, on the day then Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan testified at an inquiry conducted by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's national defense committee on alleged election cheating in Mindanao in 2004.

A week earlier, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales appeared before another Senate inquiry into a government contract with a Washington-based law firm. Gonzales refused to answer questions, prompting some senators to call for his detention.

In April 2006, the Supreme Court upheld the right of lawmakers to compel the appearance of officials of the executive branch at legislative inquiries. It said EO 464 pertained not only to Congress' right to know but also to the people's right to take part in government affairs.

But the high court also said the President had the right not only to forbid her officials from attending the Question Hour in the Senate and in the House, but also to request a closed-door session "if the security of the state or public interest so requires."

Not only the Senate

Militant activists and lawmakers are banking on the promise of two generals to assist Trillanes in looking into the political killings and forced disappearances.

Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo and Teodoro Casiño yesterday called for a joint congressional inquiry into the matter, saying members of the House should match Trillanes' intention to "ferret out the truth about the ceaseless massacre of innocents."

Ocampo said in a statement that such an inquiry would "express the sense" of the two chambers "that extrajudicial executions have no place in civilized society and that the masterminds and perpetrators, whether they come from the state security forces, should be held accountable."

He added: "The nation and the international community expect both chambers of Congress, not just the Senate, to help shed light on the cold-blooded murder of activists whom the military routinely tag as enemies of the state."

In a separate statement, Renato Reyes, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), said National Security Adviser Gonzales should be the first in a line of government officials to face the inquiry.

"Gonzales holds the view that all legal leftist groups are communist fronts and that the only good communist is a dead communist. He is the key to the government policy on the killings. This is a known fact," Reyes said.

Reyes added that when summoned to testify, Gonzales "should not hide behind executive privilege or invoke national security matters" because "he has a lot of explaining to do with the current government policy versus the legal Left."

Not buying it

Leftist groups are apparently not buying Esperon's statement that the military has no such policy.

Esperon made the denial on Monday, a day following the INQUIRER report that two generals were planning to help Trillanes look into the killings and disappearances.

He made the same denial yesterday to reporters, who had asked whether previous declarations by officials like Gonzales against militant groups could have prompted military men to conduct the liquidations.

"We have no orders to soldiers to go after militant organizations," Esperon said.

The two generals had told the INQUIRER on condition of anonymity that they would provide Trillanes "ammunition" he could use in privilege speeches or Senate investigations.

Per the generals' account, a fellow general had once "spoken openly" about killing activists during a command conference in Luzon. Another general present at the meeting was so appalled by the discussion that he sought clarification with Gen. Generoso Senga, the then AFP chief of staff.

Senga, who retired in July 2006, said such killings were not a military policy, according to the two generals.

They also said they would supply Trillanes with ammunition on the military's supposed involvement in the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal of 2005.

Necessary clout

Bayan Muna's Casiño said he wanted a joint congressional investigation that would have the "necessary clout to make the AFP cooperate."

He said that during the 13th Congress, military officials summoned for similar inquiries snubbed the proceedings on three occasions. In one instance, he said, the military sent spies, supposedly to prevent witnesses from testifying.

"This time, Esperon and his officers should not hide behind the President's [EO 464] to justify their nonappearance," Casiño said. "Malacañang should not coddle the AFP top brass and instead order them to attend all hearings on the killings."

Bayan's Reyes said the planned inquiry should involve the supposed military document, "Knowing the Enemy," and the counterinsurgency plan dubbed Oplan Bantay Laya I and II.

The document "explicitly recommends that apart from armed groups, the legal Left should also be the target of military operations," Reyes said.

"These are all policy pronouncements as far as we're concerned. The communist labeling of legal activists is itself a policy that encourages extrajudicial killings," he said.

Unable to identify generals

Esperon yesterday said that he had spoken with Senga about the claim of the two generals. But he invoked "privileged communication" and declined to say what they had talked about.

Asked whether it was possible for one military unit to perpetrate the political killings without official sanction, Esperon said: "It is in the realm of possibilities, but as I said, I must emphasize we are not ordering such. We are even condemning [the killings]."

He said the other day that he would verify the two generals' allegations.

Yesterday, Esperon said it would be "only natural" for the military to investigate the two generals, except that it was yet unable to identify them.

Actually, he said, the "circumstances" of the INQUIRER report had raised several questions, including whether it was true that there were two generals who would provide Trillanes the necessary information, and what could be their purpose in doing so.

'We will oblige'

Apparently referring to his alleged involvement in the "Hello Garci" scandal involving the claim that Ms Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano rigged the 2004 presidential election—which both parties have denied—Esperon said he was willing to face an inquiry.

He made the assurance that "we will oblige" any investigations "where we will be allowed to appear—if indeed it will be found that it is to our common interest."

"We are not about to run away from such things, provided there is evidence, and provided it is done in the right forum," he said.

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Cabinet execs urge lenient handling …

From page A1

and the military.

He has served notice that he would perform his senatorial duties even in detention.

Desierto in panel

The Cabinet official said the group was in favor of seeing Trillanes walk out of detention to join his colleagues in the new Senate.

But this should be done through the legal process, the official said, adding that the Palace legal team had been assigned to study the government's options in Trillanes' case.

According to the official, one of those being consulted by Malacañang is former Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, who, also being a former head of the Judge Advocate General's Office, is deemed an expert in military matters.

The official said the Cabinet secretaries, who discussed the Trillanes issue at their recent meeting, had a consensus that he should not be prevented from fulfilling his duties and functions as a legislator.

"He should be allowed to do his work, to function as much as he can without compromising the military justice system," the official said.

Gov't will not oppose bait

Asked if they were advocating leniency for Trillanes, the official said: "Yes, after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

He was referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for unity after the midterm elections, in which the administration Team Unity suffered a near-rout by the Genuine Opposition.

The official also said the government would "not oppose" the grant of bail to Trillanes in the coup d'etat case filed against him before a Makati regional trial court.

"But the problem is the military justice system, because you know how sensitive military justice is," the official said.

Trillanes is also facing court-martial proceedings for violations of the Articles of War in connection with his role in the failed mutiny.

The official said the Palace legal team was studying "the legal aspects of what can be done" about the pending cases to enable Trillanes to attend Senate sessions.

"We are waiting for the legal opinion," the official said.

4 from LP

Four senators from the Liberal Party (LP) have backed a possible new petition for bail for Trillanes, who is detained at the Philippine Marine brig in Fort Bonifacio along with other junior officers involved in the Oakwood mutiny.

Trillanes' lawyer Reynaldo Robles yesterday told reporters at the Senate that his client did not intend to get out of military detention and leave his fellow Magdalos behind.

"He just wants an arrangement to work here [in the Senate]," Robles said.

Senators Rodolfo Biazon, Manuel Roxas II and Francis Pangilinan, and Senator-elect Benigno Aquino III said the courts should respect Trillanes' mandate and allow him to post bail.

Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff, suggested that the Makati RTC grant Trillanes bail or issue a special ruling that would allow him to attend Senate sessions even while under military custody.

That means Trillanes would have to be escorted daily from Fort Bonifacio to the Senate building in Pasay City.

A third option is for Trillanes to be placed under Senate custody, Biazon suggested.

The Makati RTC has previously denied Trillanes bail for the coup d'etat charge.

11M votes

Roxas said Trillanes should be allowed to attend all Senate functions "by virtue of his [11 million] votes."

"He must be permitted to serve the people, and the [AFP] should help him, not hinder him, from performing his new mandate. If this means taking the trouble of escorting him every day to and from the Senate, so be it," Roxas added.

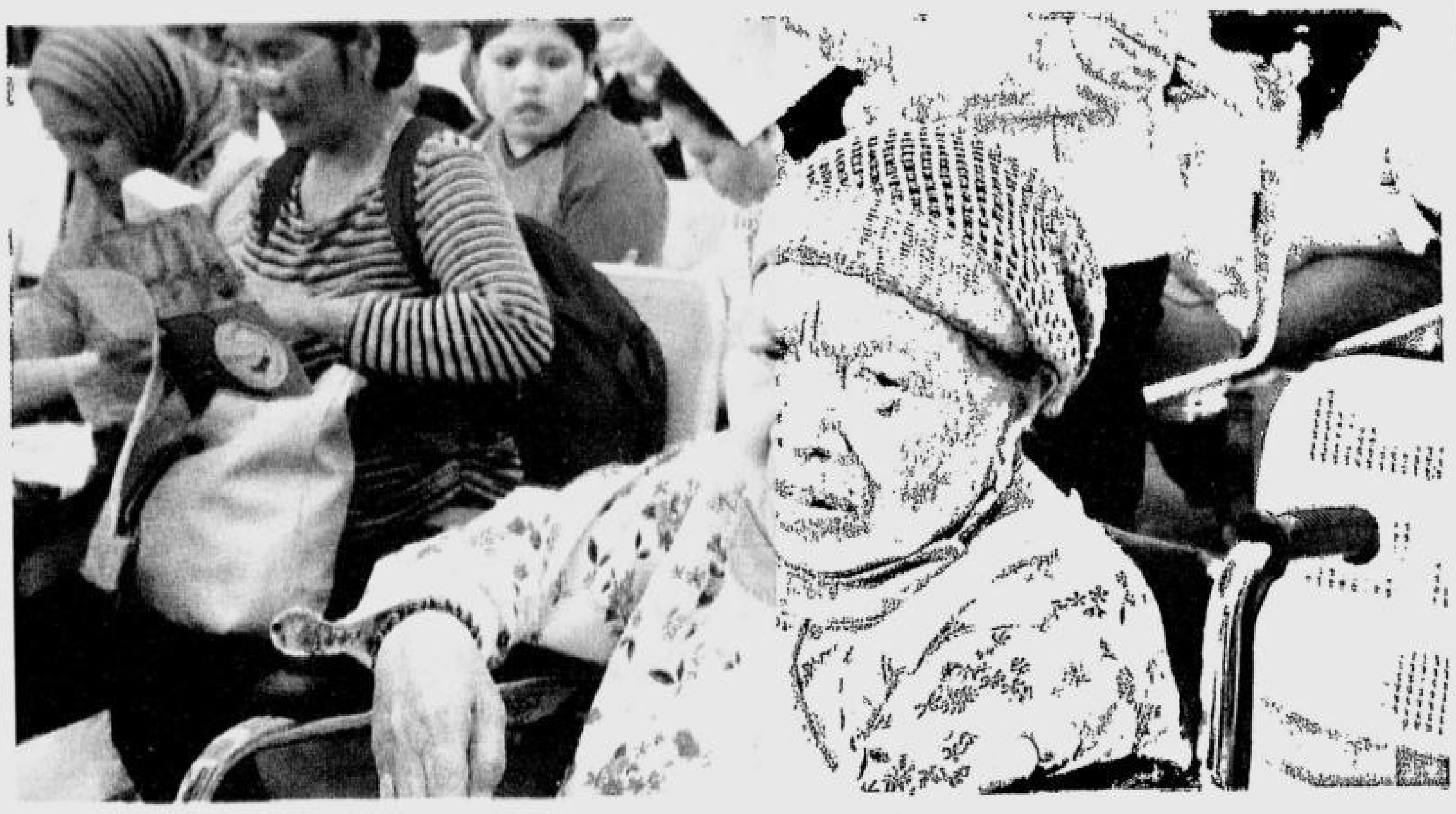
Pangilinan not only said Trillanes should be granted bail but also suggested that the Senate itself file the petition for bail because Trillanes was not a flight risk, anyway.

"Considering that he's an elected senator, the Senate should petition for him and ask for bail on his behalf," Pangilinan said.

Aquino also expressed the belief that arrangements should be made to allow Trillanes to attend Senate sessions and committee hearings.

Earlier, Senators Panfilo Lacson and Aquilino Pimentel Jr. declared that they wanted Trillanes to attend Senate sessions.

Even outgoing Sen. Alfredo Lim, who has been elected mayor of Manila, threw his support behind the grant of bail to Trillanes: "He is certainly not a flight risk. Nor is he expected to be a security risk."



KICKED OUT of Saudi Arabia, overstaying grandma Jobaida Lamalan arrives on a wheelchair at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Tuesday. JESS YUSON

Deported 'lola' says her kids didn't want her to leave Saudi

By Tarra Quismundo

THOUGH OTHERS OVERSTAYED IN THE Middle East because of employment woes, the story of this 78-year-old grandmother is different.

Among the more than 70 Filipinos deported from Saudi Arabia who arrived in separate flights yesterday, Jobaida Lamalan had her five children to blame for staying longer than she was supposed to in Jeddah, where she had travelled six months ago on her first journey to Mecca.

"My children, they did not want me to go home... I just slept and ate there most of the time and locked myself in my room," said the General Santos native in a chat with reporters.

"This is the first time I've seen anyone from Manila. I was away for such a long time," said the wheelchair-bound Lamalan, who could not recall her age when asked about it.

Saudi amnesty

Lamalan was among the 750 Filipinos who took advantage of an amnesty that the Saudi government offered to overstaying foreigners two months ago.

She was part of the fifth batch of deportees who arrived this week. Around 500 more are waiting in the Jeddah terminal for flights to Manila.

"I didn't like it there. It was so hot," she said in Filipino, squinting as if she was still being assailed by the Arabian sun.

With her granddaughter Charmaine Abubakar, Lamalan traveled to Jeddah in January on the invitation of her five children who are all professionals working there—a nurse, a midwife, an engineer, a medical technologist and a teacher.

She was to join a cousin, 68-year-old Derem Macalicod, had gone a month earlier for the religious pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage

Despite their age, the two elderly women braved the crowd of pilgrims to Mecca, the Muslim holy city. But Lamalan could not remember what month she and her cousin completed the Hajj.

"My children helped me... We went there to praise ... Allah said we have to do it," she said.

Both were supposed to return months earlier, but she said her children forced her to stay.

"They did not want to let her go home yet because they also miss her... They don't always get to see her," said Charmaine who helped her two grandmothers on their flight back to Manila.

After filling up arrival documents, the three immediately went to their Taguig home, where Lamalan's five other children and their families lived.

From Israel

Unlike Lamalan, 47-year-old Nenita Serapio was deported after her employer in Israel let her go barely two months into her employment.

Serapio was the only migrant worker from Israel in the batch of deportees who arrived yesterday. She ended up in the same plane to Manila when they boarded a connecting flight in Bahrain.

"My employer did not want to continue hiring me because I did not know how to speak their language," said Serapio, a Quezon City resident who flew to Israel only last April.

"I tried to look for other jobs but I couldn't find any so I decided to ask the government's help to come home," she said.

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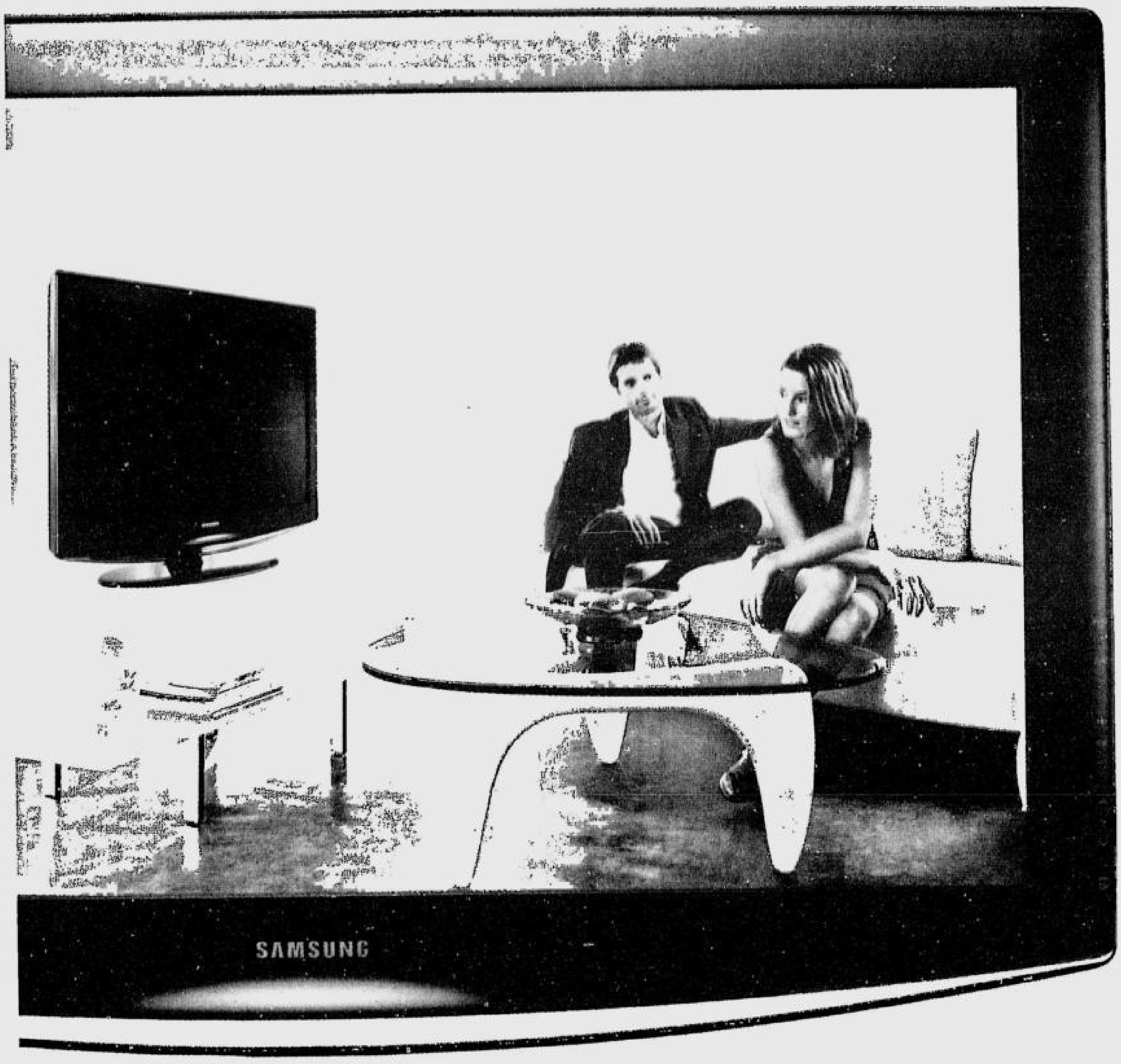

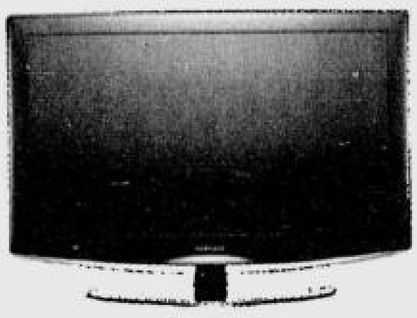

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Mike A drops another libel suit

By Allison W. Lopez

THE PRESIDENT'S HUSband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, has officially withdrawn his libel case against former Sen. Francisco Tatad, Malaya newspaper publisher Amado Macasaet, and seven of the newspaper's editorial staff.

In the motion to dismiss that he filed with Manila Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr., Arroyo said: "I have, of late, suffered a life-threatening condition. With the prayers and support of my family and friends, I have miraculously survived.

"Because I have been given a second lease on life, I have decided to forgive everyone who has caused me pain. Because of this I am no longer interested in pursuing the case."

Arroyo underwent surgery for a dissecting aortic aneurysm last April.

In June 2004, he charged the nine respondents—which included editors Ellen Tordesillas, Enrique Romualdez, Joy de los Reyes, Teresa Molina and Minnie Advincula, and reporters JP Lopez and Regina Bengco—for a May 19, 2004 article in Malaya, titled "Poe's camp says Mike is chief 'cheating' operator."

The Malaya article accused Arroyo of "manipulating election results" to favor President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Tatad was also quoted as saying that the President's operatives were "all over Mindanao, led by her famous husband."

Arroyo denied the allegations and sued for libel. In his complaint, he said the article had tagged him as being involved in election fraud by allegedly purchasing "CoCs (certificates of canvass) with the aid of military personnel and government officials" around the country, particularly in Mindanao.

Asked what the outcome would have been had Arroyo pursued the charges, Pampilo said Arroyo had "great chances of winning" as he had a strong case that there was malice in the article.

But he said he believed Arroyo was sincere in withdrawing the charges

The INQUIRER editors who were similarly sued by Arroyo are not over the hump yet.

Though Arroyo has filed the same motion to dismiss his case against the INQUIRER editors, clerk of court Rey Inciong said the fiscal decided to conduct a review in the 15 days to see if the affidavit of desistance, which was merely notarized, would be admissible in court.

He said the law called for Arroyo, the private complainant, to appear personally and swear before the trial fiscal that he executed the affidavit of desistance "of his own free will."

Arroyo slapped a P22-million libel suit against INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot, editor in chief Letty Jimenez Magsanoc, editors Jose Ma. Nolasco, Abelardo Ulanday, Jorge Aruta, Artemio Engracia Jr., Pergentino Bandayrel Jr., Rosario Garcellano and Juan Sarmiento Jr., and columnist Ramon Tulfo.

In March, the editors were detained for an hour at the holding room of a Manila police station after they posted bail.

Sandigan clears 'Bejo' in 5 cases

By Volt Contreras

IN ONE FELL SWOOP, THE government has lost five graft cases against outgoing Tacloban City Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez, a brother-in-law of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The Sandiganbayan yesterday granted Romualdez's demurrer to evidence and effectively dismissed the cases involving the allegedly anomalous sale of government-owned properties to his steel company and to a shipping and engineering firm allegedly owned by Marcos.

Romualdez, 72, a younger brother of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, was accused of intervening in five transactions in which public property was allegedly sold below value to Bataan Shipping and Engineering Corp. (Baseco) and Philippine Associated Smelter and Refining Corp. (Pasar) between 1974 and 1979.

Baseco was a private corporation allegedly owned by Marcos while Pasar was allegedly owned by Romualdez through a dummy.

In a 42-page resolution, the Sandiganbayan's Fifth Division said the prosecution failed to show sufficient proof that the sales resulted in "damage or prejudice to the government."

"It would appear, thus, in overview that the people's evidence are so bereft and wanting of even an inkling of the charges averred in the five information (criminal charge sheets)," read the ruling penned by Senior Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval, division chair.

"With the failure of the prosecution to discharge its exacting obligation to overcome the constitutional presumption of innocence, it is the right of the accused to have the case dismissed; even more so, it is our constitutional duty to absolve him," the court said.

Romualdez has served his third and last term as Tacloban mayor. The incoming mayor is his son, Alfred, who was once a Leyte congressman.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 20, 2007
11th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 2 Cor 9:6-11
Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be careful not to make a show of your righteousness before people. If you do so, you do not gain anything from your Father in heaven. When you give something to the poor, do not have it trumpeted before you, as do those who want to be seen in the synagogues and in the streets in order to be praised by the people. I assure you, they have been already paid in full.

"If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift remains really secret. Your Father who sees what is kept secret, will reward you.

"When you pray, do not be like those who want to be seen. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues or on street corners to be seen by everyone. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is with you in secret; and your Father who sees what is kept secret will reward you.

"When you fast, do not put on a miserable face as do the hypocrites. They put on a gloomy face, so people can see they are fasting. I tell you this: they have been paid in full already. When you fast, wash your face and make yourself look cheerful, because you are not fasting for appearance or for people, but for your Father who sees beyond appearances. And your Father, who sees what is kept secret will reward you."

Commentary

Do we give according to how God has given to us? This question is posed in regard to money, resources, privilege, education, food, material possessions. To believe in God our Father is to give as Jesus gave. Could we be described as those who scattered abroad and gave to the poor so his justice may endure forever?—and that's from the earlier testament. Do we consistently show how thankful we are to our God or do we take so much for granted?

Jesus is intent on reminding us that it is our heart that must direct our actions: in giving alms, in praying, fasting, and participating in ritual. What we do for show, for others' praise and to be thought well of, (or to take off our income tax returns) is not worth much to us and does little or nothing for our well-being. We are supposed to do such things, hidden with Christ in God and know then, the response of God in Christ to us.

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The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of P6,421,195.20 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Security Services Requirement of PEZA. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

Delivery of the goods is required for one (1) year. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 1380). Only Bids from bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Prospective bidders must have a minimum of five (5) years experience in providing security services and should have experience in undertaking a single similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC.

Bidders should not have any existing security services contract with any of PEZA's locators to avoid conflict of interest.

In addition, bidders must have filed their latest annual income and business tax returns (VAT and/or Percentage Taxes covering six (6) months immediately prior to the submission of bids) via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS), of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be inspected and purchased by interested Bidders from 05 to 11 July 2007, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos only (P5,000.00) and submission of a certified copy of their PhilGEPS Registration Certificate. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The PEZA will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all interested parties on 11 July 2007 at 10:00 am, at the 3rd Floor, BCEZ Conference Room, PEZA Administration Building, Loakan Road, Baguio City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 9:30 am of 23 July 2007 All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of GSIS Surety bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 1% of the ABC. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on 23 July 2007, 10:00 am at the 3rd Floor, BCEZ Conference Room, PEZA Administration Building, Loakan Road, Baguio City. Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidder's representative, who choose to attend.

In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
PEZA, Loakan Road, Baguio City
Tel. No. 447-3683; 447-4155
Email: bcez@mozcom.com.

(Sgd.) ATTY. RENE U. BAYSA
BAC Chairman

PEZA, Roxas Blvd., cor San Luis St.
Pasay City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. 551-34-36; 34-48

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(PDI—June 20 & 27, 2007)

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National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
COPYFAX COMMUNICATIONS PHILS. INC. Unit 2208 Prestige Tower, Emerald Ave., Pasig City	Kurt Stephen Rasmussen	Manager
GENDIESEL PHILIPPINES, INC. 6305 South Expressway, Makati City	Tiruvalangadu Ramamurti Mohan	President & General Manager
TONG KEUN CALL SERVICE CORPORATION Unit 6, 6/F The One Executive Bldg., West Ave., Quezon City	Jungsoo Lee	Supervisor
PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE COMPANY (PLDT) 6/F Ramon Cojuangco Bldg., Makati Ave., Makati City	Tatsu Kono	Board of Director & Chief Operating Advisor
E-TELECARE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS INC. 31/F Cyberone Bldg., Eastwood Cyberpark, Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Jared Dennis Morrison	Site Director
MEEJOO LATEX CORPORATION U-4 G/F & 2/F, No. 5 Salem International Corporation, Domestic Rd., Pasay City	Jung-In Hwang	Sales Consultant
PINAY AND PINOY INTERNET CAFE CORP. 1673 Taft Ave., Malate, Manila	Anita Rani	Accountant
BESTON RICH MINERALS INC. Unit 2410 Sunview Palace Condo, M.H. del Pilar St., Ermita, Manila	Chaoyou Hong	Vice President
NETSUITE (PHILIPPINES) INC. 6/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	James Cameron Dantow	General Manager
NEW GEN KIMS FAMILY CORPORATION 5059 P. Burgos St., Poblacion, Makati City	Jihwan Kim	Marketing Manager
PC PARK INC. Unit 13, 3/F Aurora Garden Plaza, Aurora Blvd., cor. Gilmore St., New Manila, Quezon City	Chunshik Yun	Finance Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 330-3013 & 303-[illegible].

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–June 20, 2007)

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AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply of a **FINANCIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM SOFTWARE and DATABASE SERVER**.

The approved budget for the contract is Four Million Eight Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 4.8M).

Bidding Documents may be purchased from the BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P2,000.00) starting **21 June to 28 June 2007**.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on **5 July 2007, 2 p.m.** at the CPA Conference Room.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the BAC Secretariat on or before 9 a.m. on **17 July 2007** at the CPA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, CIP Complex, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security. **(Late bids shall not be accepted.)**

The Cebu Port Authority (CPA) reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, or to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **MARIO G. TAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **ANGELO C. VERDAN**
General Manager

(PDI–June 20, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office III
PhilHealth Bldg., Lazatin Blvd., San Agustin, City of San Fernando
Healthline (046) 961-7148 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB No. III-07-001

PhilHealth Regional Office III (PRO III), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites registered and licensed security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Procurement of Security Services
Location	PhilHealth Bldg., Lazatin Blvd., Dolores, City of San Fernando
Brief Description	Provision of 29 security guards to be deployed at PhilHealth Regional Office, Record Center and 10 PhilHealth Service Offices in Region III
Approved Budget for the Contract	Php 6,061,000.00
Contract Duration:	One (1) year
Delivery Period	Within 15 days after issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 20 to July 2, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	July 2, 2007 at 1:30 PM
3. Opening of Bids	July 13, 2007 at 1:30 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	July 16 to July 20, 2007
5. Post-Qualification	July 23 to 27, 2007
6. Notice of Award	August 10, 2007

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 6,000.00 to the Cashier of PhilHealth Regional Office III.

(Sgd.) PRISCILLA G. ASUNCION
Outgoing BAC Chairman

(PDI - June 20 & 26, 2007)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000, 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget
1 Lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of Voice Logger System	P3,000,000.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department at the 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila starting June 20, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P1,500.00.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at Procurement Department Conference Room at 2:00 PM, June 28, 2007. Bidding for the above requirement is scheduled on July 11, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

Please address your queries to the Head-Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, or call 405-7370; 551-0000 locals 2290 & 2293.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - June 20, 2007)

JDV allies ask GSIS head to resign

SENIOR HOUSE LEADERS HAVE ASKED Winston Garcia to voluntarily resign as president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System to quell public suspicion that he is aiding his father's bid for the House speakership.

According to the lawmakers, Garcia has been using the "clout and resources of his office" to gain support for his father, congressman-elect Pablo Garcia, who announced his bid for the speakership late last month.

"Winston Garcia is in a highly sensitive position. He has no business using the resources of his office and interfering in an internal affair of the House of Representatives," the House leaders said in a joint press statement.

Among those who called for Garcia's resignation included Deputy Majority Leader Arthur Defensor, and Representatives Mauricio Domogan of Baguio and Bienvenido Abante of Manila, all allies of Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Last week, Abante, a well-known bishop, said he received reports that GSIS resources were being used to gain support for the elder Garcia's campaign to wrest the speakership from De Venecia.

Up to P300,000 was being offered to support the elder Garcia, he said.

The operations for the Garcia House candidacy reportedly had been directed from a room at the Dusit Hotel in Makati for over a month.

Earlier, Rep. Eduardo Zialcita said he was present at De Venecia's residence when he and seven other lawmakers, including Rep. Amado Bagatsing, voluntarily signed the manifesto committing their support for the Speaker and his 12-point economic action program for the 14th Congress.

"I brought Rep. Bagatsing to the Speaker's house. In the presence of six other solons, we all signed the manifesto of support voluntarily," Zialcita said. "No envelop was given by a staff, and no lawmaker asked for one."

In a joint statement, the senior House leaders raised "the very serious concern that the young Garcia has been promoting his father's candidacy propped up by the GSIS."

"This is a highly immoral and unethical situation that cannot continue," they said and asked Garcia to resign as GSIS head or be the first high official to be sacked in the imminent government revamp.

"In the interest of fairness and in the interest of millions of GSIS members, Garcia should heed this call and resign," the House leaders said.

FROM TONDO TO FORBES PARK

Metro water dirty, says St. Luke's test

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FROM SLUMS TO POSH VILLAGES, from Tondo to Forbes Park, residents in the metropolis could be drinking and bathing with water contaminated with bacteria and fecal matter, which can cause gastrointestinal problems and even skin diseases, if test results from a private testing center are to be believed.

It is not only tap water that could be posing danger, but even those from deep wells and even purified bottled water, according to results presented by QualiBet Testing Services at a weekly health forum sponsored by the Philippine College of Physicians in Quezon City.

QualiBet is a private company which tests water, food and cosmetics. It was one of those contracted by the St. Luke's Medical Center to keep tabs on water quality in their establishment.

The summary of results included tap water tests that the company did for walk-in clients over the past three months, according to QualiBet owner and chemist Pinky Tobiano.

The safest and most economical way to ensure water safety: "Boil water," St. Luke's Medical Center food and beverage department head Maria Luisa Rivera said at the same forum.

Water firms reply

Sought for comment, Manila Water media relations manager Ranny Habaluyas maintained the water it is supplying "is very clean" and is even "above standards."

"That is not true. We refute that claim. We have more than 930 sampling points to monitor quality. If that were true, it would have registered in our samples," Habaluyas said.

Maynilad Water Services spokesperson Jess Matubis also maintained the water it was supplying was safe, saying that they had not yet received any complaints from their customers.

"They (QualiBet) are trying to promote their company but they should be ethical. If the results were true, they should have reported it to the city health authorities so we could have quickly acted," Matubis also said.

"We assure our customers that our water is safe," he added.

Manila Water services the metropolis' east zone while Maynilad services west zone.

Illegal connections

Tobiano said the problem could be with connections inside compounds and houses, where water distributors like Manila Water no longer have control.

She also pointed to the possibility of illegal connections affecting water quality.

Private water distributors take responsibility for the main lines and pipes up to the water meter of each house. "Beyond that is the responsibility of the house owners."

According to Tobiano, who suffers from thyroid cancer, her company was born out of an advocacy to prevent cancer.

Tobiano said that residents in areas experiencing gastrointestinal illnesses had approached the company to avail themselves of its water-testing services. The testing comes with a P500 fee, she said.

Areas affected

She said company employees were the ones who took samples in at least 12 houses in the streets were their clients live. Results were out in four days.

According to the report of QualiBet dated June 11, water samples from faucets in streets in the following areas were found positive with E. Coli Bacteria: Tondo in Manila City, Parañaque City, Mother Ignacia in Quezon City, Caloocan City and even Forbes Park in Makati City and Corinthian Garden in Quezon City.

Fecal matter were also found in quantities higher than the safe level in the tap water sample taken from Mother Ignacia.

The report did not specify from which particular streets the water samples were taken.

Samples of deep well water from Sucat and Bicutan in Parañaque City were also found with E. Coli and fecal matter, while that from Alabang, Muntinlupa City was also found with E. Coli. The company also found E. Coli in purified water samples from Acropolis, Quezon City.

Some E. Coli bacteria can live harmlessly in human intestines. Other forms can cause serious gastrointestinal and kidney infections.

Tobiano also warned that buying purified or distilled water is not a guarantee of safety. She said customers should ask for certificates of analysis to prove if the companies complied with regular testing and standards.

How to boil water

Rivera, who recommended boiling water, added that there is a correct way to do it.

Home owners should not overboil water, she said. The stove should be turned off after the water bubbles for three minutes or the metal kettle will react with the water, Tobiano said.

Rivera also advised homeowners to let boiled water cool first before storing it in the refrigerator. Storing hot water will lower temperature inside the fridge, risking bacteria growth in other stored foods, she added.

'Beauty of RP' in photo contest

THE FIRST PHILIPPINE AIRLINES PHOTO Contest will be launched on June 22 at the Embassy, The Fort, Global City, Taguig.

Open to all amateur and professional photography buffs, the contest, with the theme "The Beauty of the Philippines," aims to promote the country's ecotourism. It also includes a children's category, a first in the country. The event hopes to encourage and nurture the artistic talents of the youth.

After the contest launch, a series of photo clinics will be conducted from June to August by five of the country's top lensmen—George Tapan, Bien Bautista, Edwin Loyola, Vic Sison and Jay Alonzo.

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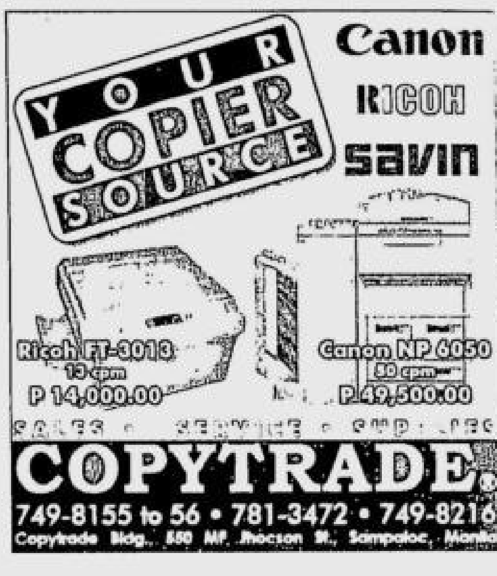
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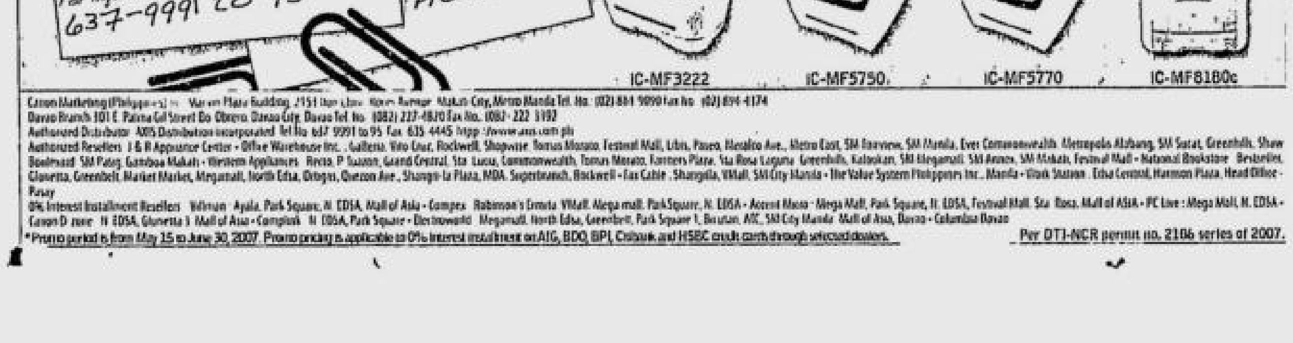
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Descendants, environmentalists mark Rizal birth anniversary

By TJ Burgonio

UNDER A SLIGHT DRIZZLE, amid the green of Rizal Park, Jose Rizal's descendants and environmentalists yesterday marked his 146th birth anniversary with a reminder to all: Protect the environment and respect history.

At the Orchidarium, an enclave at the park dotted with trees and lush greenery, they recalled a little known aspect of Rizal's life—he was an environmentalist.

As a tribute, they gave away at least 146 seedlings of indigenous trees to youngsters from Calamba, Laguna, the hero's birthplace.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, in his address "Trees for Life: Remembering Rizal, the Environmentalist," said that Rizal planted trees as a young boy in Calamba and later in his life, in Dapitan.

"As a young child, he took particular interest in taking care of plants and insects," he said, quoting Rizal's great-granddaughter, writer Barbara "Tweetums" Gonzales.

"Even during the time when the environment was not a currency of the moment, when the environment was not yet considered a concern or a problem, he was already an environmentalist," Reyes said.

Global warming

Anita Celdran, director of the Sustainable Management Project, said that if he were alive today, Rizal would have been "in the best position" to talk about global warming.

"His life in Dapitan as an exile, no doubt, exhibited his passion and love for nature, for the native land, the Pearl of the Orient, the Eden lost, as reverberated in his journals, prose and his poems," Celdran said in her talk on "Rizal in the Time of Global Warming."

The challenge to everyone, Reyes said, was to preserve the country's heritage, including the country's dwindling forest cover.

"We deserve a better environment, but we must work on it," Reyes added. "As the scientists had pointed out, damage to the environment is being caused by man. Unless something is done, we might reach a tipping point."

You're a man if ...

To cap the celebration, Reyes, Rene Azurin of Green Army, Odette Alcantara of Mother Earth and Rizal's descendants—Gonzales and Maricel Lopez-Bretault—handed over seedlings to young environmentalists from Calamba and members of the Grand Knights of Rizal.

"I think it's significant that we are bequeathing to you these seedlings. It's really your generation that will have to nurture and protect these trees so that the environment will be restored, so that what we, our generation, destroyed—may be partially restored to you," Azurin said.

This was the first time that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Green Army distributed seedlings to the public since launching the "Trees for Life," a joint project to plant 20 million trees across the country between July and November last year.

Fr. Ben Beltran, parish priest of Smokey Mountain, pledged to donate 1 million seedlings grown in a 1-hectare property in the former garbage dumpsite in Tondo, Manila.

"There's a Chinese proverb which says: 'You're a man if you've written a book, sired a son and planted a tree.' These requirements are much too rigorous for most of us," National Artist F. Sionil Jose said in his inspirational talk. "It's enough that we shall have planted a tree by now."

Respect for history

In the same celebration, former Tourism Secretary Gemma Cruz-Araneta, also a great granddaughter of Rizal, urged the people to emulate Rizal who showed respect for history throughout his life.

"Let's not change what should not be changed," she said in her message.

"Let's carry on what has been taught by our heroes. Let's not change what has been established by our heroes. Let's respect that and celebrate this on their designated days," Cruz said.

Young ...

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lar idea, but the way we executed our ad made it for us," they said.

"It was a charity ad to give children in war-stricken areas a chance for a better life through sports. We showed children running from attack and placed the ball there, and it happens to be also the logo of the charity," they added.

The gold medal for the Young Creatives Competition went to the team from Chile, the other silver went to Australia, and the bronze to Brazil.

25,000 entries

Cannes Lions, now on its 54th year, received a record 25,000 entries from 80 countries competing for the right to be known as the world's best ads.

The festival in the south of France attracts over 11,000 of the world's leading advertising professionals.

In the first part of the June 17-23 festival, five Philippine ad agencies garnered an astounding 26 short lists—BBDO Guerrero Ortega with 11, JWT Manila with six, and Lowe Philippines, Ogilvy & Mather Philippines, and TBWA\Santiago Mangada Puno with three each, across the print, outdoor, radio and media categories.

A record number of Philippine delegates and entries were received in Cannes this year and expectations for a strong Philippine win were high after three Cannes Lions bronzes in 2006.

YOUNG CREATIVES from Leo Burnett, Carmela Advincula and Mignon Wilhelma Tobias, competed against 35 teams representing the world's top young creative teams at the world's largest and most advertising prestigious festival, the Cannes Lions.

Jury president

David Guerrero, chairman of BBDO Guerrero Ortega, was named the first jury president from Southeast Asia and the Philippines to preside in Cannes for this year's competitions, overseeing a 16-member international jury for the Radio Lions.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer, the official country festival representative at Cannes, is represented by its vice president, Pepito Olarte. He plays host to the 26-member Philippine delegation.

Ad agencies, media practitioners, clients and young creatives form this year's delegation.

Gov't ...

From page A1

infant formula products and requested the BFAD to conduct an investigation, Health Undersecretary for Regulations Alexander Padilla told the INQUIRER.

The contamination on the exterior of the cans was in the form of molds, according to the report received by the DOH.

Geese get revenge ...

From page A1

known as amyloidosis, researchers reported on Monday.

Tests on mice suggest the liver, popular in French cuisine which uses it to make paté de foie gras and other dishes, may cause the condition in animals that have a genetic susceptibility to such diseases, Alan Solomon of the University of Tennessee and colleagues reported.

That would suggest that amyloidosis can be transmitted via food in a way akin to brain diseases such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, or CJD, which can cause a rare version of mad cow disease in some people who eat affected meat products or brains.

Amyloidosis can affect various organ systems in the body, which accumulate damaging deposits of abnormal proteins known as amyloid. The heart, kidneys, nervous system and gastrointestinal tract are most often affected but amyloidosis can also cause a blood condition.

A form of dementia

The researchers used mice genetically engineered to be susceptible to amyloidosis, which can be inherited.

"When such mice were injected with or fed amyloid extracted from foie gras, the animals developed extensive systemic pathological deposits," Solomon's team reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Sometimes Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is described as a type of amyloidosis as well.

Symptoms are often vague and range from fatigue and weight loss to swelling and kidney damage.

Like CJD, mad cow disease, scrapie and related diseases, amyloidosis is marked by abnormal protein fragments. In the case of CJD, the proteins are called prions.

"On this basis, we posit that this and perhaps other forms of amyloidosis may be transmissible, akin to the infectious nature of prion-related illnesses," the researchers added.

"In addition to foie gras, meat derived from sheep and seemingly healthy cattle may represent other dietary sources of this material."

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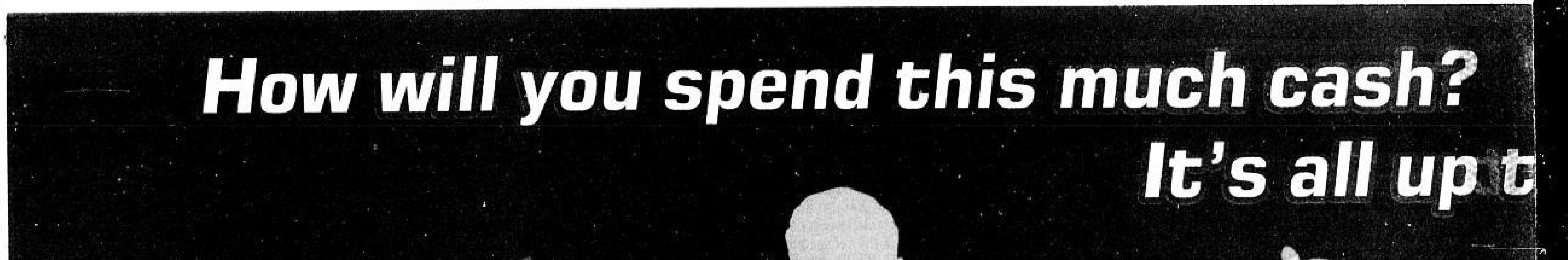

Government Warning: Cigarette sm

Koko takes case to Supreme Court

From page A1

team would be able to gather, pointing out that more than a month had passed since the elections.

"These documents are no longer trustworthy," he said.

Opposition lawyers have expressed the fear that the vote tallies that Maguindanao poll officials would submit had been "manufactured."

Security concerns

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said that in General Santos City, the poll inspectors "will be able to talk freely" and this would also ease security problems.

Pimentel said he was filing today a petition for prohibition and certiorari against Abalos and Commissioners Rene Sarmiento and Nicodemo Ferrer, who will accompany the Comelec chair on the trip.

Abalos and Ferrer plan to remain in General Santos while Sarmiento will make a side trip to Lanao del Sur, which was also the scene of poll cheating.

Comelec's tabulation of the Maguindanao provincial certificate of canvass (CoC), or vote tallies, was stalled by allegations that in some areas, public school teachers were forced by armed men to write down the names of TU senatorial candidates on the ballots.

In other areas, gunmen filled out the ballots themselves.

The incidents allegedly occurred in several barangays in the town of Pagalungan.

Plea for fairness

Based on the Comelec's last official tally, Pimentel is ahead of Zubiri by more than 111,000 votes, without the Maguindanao tally.

Lawyers of both GO and TU said that with the Maguindanao votes, Zubiri would knock Pimentel off 12th place. An unofficial Maguindanao tally shown to reporters gave Zubiri 195,823 votes against Pimentel's 67,057 votes.

Zubiri has been urging the Comelec to go ahead with the tabulation of the Maguindanao votes.

Abalos yesterday said it was unfair of GO to conclude that the poll documents from Maguindanao were fake.

"Let us see, let us not just say they are manufactured. Anyhow, once they are presented, they have the right to object to all of these," Abalos told reporters.

Comelec has been looking for the municipal certificates of canvass from the province that were supposed to back the provincial CoC showing the TU senatorial slate winning all the top 12 spots.

Bedol's proof

Comelec officials themselves have expressed doubts about the provincial tallies, saying it was "statistically improbable" for 19 out of the 37 senatorial candidates to have received no votes at all.

Task Force Maguindanao, chaired by Ferrer, was formed to investigate alleged election fraud in the province.

Bedol caused a stir when he came to Manila and told Comelec officials that his copies of vote tallies had been stolen.

Abalos earlier said the Maguindanao municipal election officers had told Comelec they could not go to Manila for lack of funds. Instead, they asked that the commissioners come to Maguindanao.

Regional Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has presented a copy of the minutes of the provincial canvassing signed by Bedol and other members of the provincial Board of Canvassers. Abalos said this might prove that elections were indeed held.

The findings of the Abalos team would be evaluated by the Comelec en banc prior to a ruling on the Maguindanao fiasco.

If the documents were proved authentic, Abalos said, the special provincial board of canvassers would be reconstituted to tally the votes for the national positions—senator and party-lists.

Opposition boycott

GO lead counsel Sixto Brillantes said the opposition party would not join the Abalos trip today.

"We do not intend to participate in the Maguindanao trip. Anyway, it is very much like a fishing expedition because they're going there even if they don't even know what documents they are seeking," he told reporters.

TU lawyer Romulo Macalintal said his clients would join the Abalos trip and thus end the controversy plaguing the Maguindanao voting results.

"TU is ready to go there and see for itself the proof that elections were held in Maguindanao, based on the documents that the election officers are said to present," he said.

Doubts about the figures reflected in the CoC from Maguindanao deepened when Bedol claimed his copies were stolen from his office.

The municipal CoCs and statement of votes should support figures reflected in the provincial CoC.

Ampatuan: Elections held

Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan has repeatedly said that elections were held in his province and that the victory of TU was the result of consultations among local leaders.

Fr. David Procalla, coordinator of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), which monitored the voting in six towns, said elections were held in the province.

"It's unfair to come to that conclusion (that no elections took place) just because the PPCRV was only able to deploy volunteers in those areas," Procalla earlier told the INQUIRER.

80% of teachers have no access to ATM, suffer GSIS eCards

From page A1

rest to use the old check system—until a better solution arose.

GlobeCash, Smart Padala or Western Union could be workable options.

It is true that the existing check system is prone to forgery and fraud. The DepEd tried to address the former by buying better security checks to protect teachers. Unscrupulous individuals, however, still perpetuate the onerous practice of "rediscounting" checks. This is definitely not good, but asking the teacher to go through all that trouble and expense just to get to an ATM is just as bad.

Granted that the cost of printing checks can run into the millions of pesos. But saving the GSIS P250 million a year and passing this on to pensioners and teachers is disproportionate to their benefits and, therefore, unfair. The GSIS can afford to absorb the additional cost. After all, its claimed operating surplus is P50 billion.

The real culprit?

The vice president for public affairs of the GSIS places the real culprit on poor teacher records at the DepEd.

There are two sets of records she should have identified: DepEd personnel service records (PSR) and GSIS membership service profiles (MSP).

The DepEd PSR is the official government record based on the Civil Service Commission and Department of Budget and Management database. It is the basis for paying teacher salaries and benefits. The information on the GSIS-MSP on the other hand, comes from the GSIS member himself.

There is indeed a discrepancy between the PSR and the MSP. The latter usually has higher salary figures because members tend to overstate their income so they can get larger loans from the GSIS.

The DepEd maintains that since the PSRs are the basis for paying teachers, these should be used as the basis for determining the MSPs. The GSIS, on the other hand, assumes that the MSPs are correct because members have filled them out when they first enrolled in the system.

However, unless a member voluntarily updates his MSP, the GSIS has no way of knowing when a teacher has been promoted, given a merit increase, resigned or is no longer living.

Premium payments

In early 2003, the DepEd received a letter from GSIS president Winston Garcia stating that the department had not paid over P5.9 billion in premiums for teachers since 1997. Letters to regional and division offices also stated that if these were not paid, the teachers would be held legally liable under the GSIS Act.

DepEd records, on the other hand, showed that the "unpaid premiums" were closer to P900 million over an 18-month period, from July 1997 to December 1998, when the national government did not pay the GSIS the additional premium on the government share. (That's a different issue that GSIS members should not be held accountable for).

Why the large discrepancy? First, the GSIS was remiss in booking all payments in their system. The DepEd had to produce official receipts to get these updated.

Synchronized records

Secondly, because the MSP salary figures were overstated, the GSIS was charging more premium than the DepEd was paying on a per teacher basis.

In mid-2003, as the DepED undersecretary for finance and administration, I proposed to Garcia that we update the GSIS-MSPs to synchronize the records of both agencies and establish the real level of unpaid premiums.

Garcia insisted, however, that the GSIS-MSPs were the correct records and that it was the DepEd's own "poor" record-keeping that was the issue. At a meeting called by Malacañang in January 2004, an agreement was reached in which the reconciliation would use the DepEd PSRs as source documents.

The GSIS instructed the DepEd to encode all PSRs in Excel worksheets and store these in zip disks for easy uploading into the GSIS system. In April 2004, the DepEd had already encoded and submitted 80 percent of the PSRs. By July 2004, the remaining 20 percent representing new teachers and divisions were transmitted.

After six months, the GSIS told the DepEd that their system could not read the Excel files and that all teacher PSRs would have to be reencoded. The DepEd agreed on condition that the GSIS pay for the entire effort since it was for its benefit.

Spin outright dishonest

That is why the GSIS is bankrolling the P17.2-million project to rectify the GSIS-MSPs, not the DepED PSRs. The PR spin that GSIS is doing this to help the DepEd "rectify its PSRs" is outright dishonest.

The teachers' "real GSIS concern" is not about technology or teachers' records; it's about poor—and sometimes rude—service. Customer satisfaction is what it's all about.

(The writer is a former undersecretary for finance and administration of the Department of Education and is now president of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction.)

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Wild-goose chase

WHEN COMELEC CHAIR BENJAMIN ABALOS WAS asked for his reaction to Legal Network for Truthful Elections (Lente) co-convenor Carlos Medina's opinion that whistle-blowers in Maguindanao didn't trust him, this was his reply: "They are just besmirching me, but I forgive them." Which leads us to ask how on earth Abalos thinks anyone can possibly besmirch him more than he has besmirched himself.

EDITORIAL

We've said it before, and we say it again: When the Comelec borrows a line from the movie "Casablanca"—it's shocked, shocked that there's an electoral mess in Maguindanao—it's not cute. Instead, it reminds the nation of Karl Marx's famous observation on official folly: the first time the Comelec says it it's a farce, but each subsequent repetition is a tragedy.

The Comelec may have been hoping to salvage the situation in Maguindanao by simply declaring a province-wide failure of elections, which would allow it to sweep allegations of a bungled election under the rug. But local officials had been proclaimed in nearly all the provincial races. So obviously, some sort of election took place in most places in Maguindanao. Which then led to the allegations of electoral fraud returning to center stage again and again—and they still won't go away, despite the unsolved murder of witnesses.

And the disappearance of election documents—documents that in the first place took a suspiciously long time to even materialize. So suspicious was the delay that Namfrel stated it would refuse to count whatever figures appeared on the documents even if they appeared. What happened, of course, courtesy of the provincial election supervisor, Lintang Bedol, is that the documents were "stolen."

So now what Abalos wants to do is mount a junket to Maguindanao, where he will lead a search for duplicates of the missing documents, or at least, start a hunt for documents that could serve as replacement for the "stolen" documents. If useful documents are found, he then proposes to examine them, and conduct a kind of forensic accounting of the votes.

But even if documents are found—and they will be, at best, tallies of votes that have to stand as substitutes for the originals that were "stolen"—they will be pieces of paper that took so long to materialize that their credibility has been impossibly compromised. If half a month ago, Namfrel had already concluded that any documents that might surface were so delayed as to be literally, incredible, what more documents pieced together to serve as substitutes for documents that have vanished?

Abalos proposes counting backwards, to reconstitute an official count that never materialized. But what would he be recounting? Results that have been questioned basically from day one. Whether the Comelec counts backward or forward, it will be counting numbers that election watchdogs and witnesses claim are flawed and compromised results. A wild-goose chase: hunting for numbers that, even if found, are so discredited as to be useless is a waste of energy and resources.

Of course, the Comelec, stuck with the political reality of the Maguindanao allies of the administration refusing to submit to a fresh election, might have said only half a failure of elections took place. It could conceivably have argued that Maguindanaoans voted for local officials but that their national vote for senators was so flawed as to be unacceptable. But to do so would be to admit what it has always refused to admit: that the local officials in the province tried to manipulate the senatorial vote so much that they voided the results. It would bring the Comelec back to square one, which is, to tackle the allegations of fraud and do something about it.

That ought to be a condition for the holding of fresh elections, but it is one condition that the Comelec seems unwilling to contemplate because then the administration allies and the Comelec itself would lose face. But how much more face can the Comelec lose? How about considering the unthinkable? Protect the witnesses. Listen to them and to their pleas for Abalos to inhibit himself. And listen to the watchdogs and fulfill the conditions required to hold a fresh, credible, senatorial election in the province.

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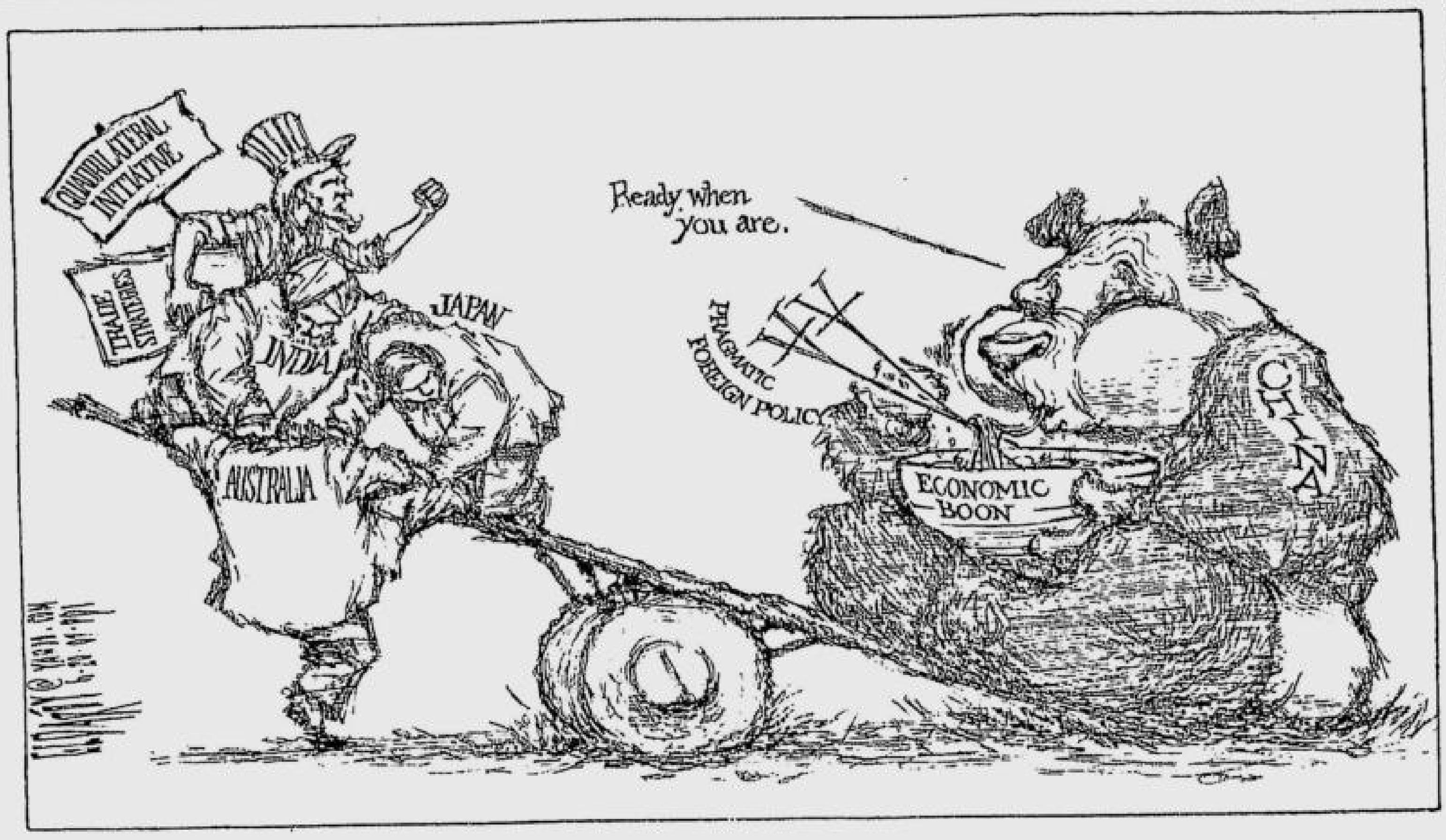


Conqueror of Pacquiao at Kapihan sa Manila

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

CAN IT BE THAT COMELEC CHAIR BENJAMIN Abalos has been getting "Hello Ben" calls? From his recent behavior on the Maguindanao poll, it seems that he has a phone pal to whom he cannot say no. Abalos seems to be under extreme pressure, torn between his duty as an independent regulator of elections and the orders of somebody very powerful.

How explain his recent flip-flopping? One day he says that the 12-0 result in Maguindanao for Team Unity senatorial candidates are "statistically improbable." The next day he says "there was no failure of elections there *pala*" (because winners in the local elections have been proclaimed), and prepares to count the highly improbable Maguindanao "votes" for senators.

I say "votes," but according to teachers and members of poll watchdogs who were there, there was no voting in Maguindanao. What the Comelec is going to count are merely numbers on alleged Certificates of Canvass (CoCs) but they don't really represent actual votes cast in any Maguindanao election.

When the Comelec asked its provincial election supervisor, Lintang Bedol, where were the election returns and Statements of Votes upon which the CoC was based, Bedol said "they were stolen." (Somebody whispered to me, "Have you noticed the physical similarity of Virgilio Garcillano to Lintang Bedol and Benjamin Abalos?")

Without these supporting documents, the CoC is nothing and the Comelec cannot count the votes there. If the Comelec junks these numbers (which it should do), the 12th winning senator would be Koko Pimentel of the Genuine Opposition. But if the Comelec counts them, Migz Zubiri of Team Unity would be able to overtake Koko and win by a few thousand votes. But if the Comelec also counts the votes from Biñan, Laguna, Koko would win. But the Comelec has suspended the counting of Biñan votes because a son-in-law of Abalos had asked for the suspension when he was about to lose in the municipal canvassing. And like a good father-in-law, Abalos suspended the counting for Biñan but will proceed to count the votes from Maguindanao.

To justify his flip-flop, Abalos said he himself will go to Maguindanao to determine whether or nor voting actually took place there, and maybe also look for the documents allegedly "stolen" from Bedol. Now I ask you: How can one man, even if he is Abalos, determine if voting actually took place in Maguindanao, one month after the elections?

But it is not "improbable" for Abalos to declare that elections actually took place in Maguindanao and say, "Look, I found the lost election returns and SoVs. Now we can canvass the votes." Aquilino Pimentel III would then be like his old man, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., a victim of *dagdag-bawas*.

Abalos would not be able to live down that action, but that may get him appointed to the Supreme Court when he leaves the Comelec. Ex-Comelec chairmen have been promoted to the Supreme Court, so why not Abalos?

* * *

The only Filipino who knocked out boxing champion Manny Pacquiao was one of the guests at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday. Looking at her, you would think she couldn't harm a fly. She looks so frail, so slim, with a figure other girls would envy, and has the face of a shy teenaged school girl. Kapihan regulars and Manila Hotel waiters murmured, "*Ang bata pa pala, parang* teenager" and then proceeded to have their pictures taken with her. But yes, this wisp of a girl trounced world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao—and resoundingly, like a first round knockout.

This conqueror of Pacquiao is Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio of General Santos City in South Cotabato, the hometown of Pacquiao. With her at the Kapihan was Representative-elect Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro, erstwhile spokesman of former President Joseph Estrada. Together, they answered questions on the battle for the speakership between Speaker Jose de Venecia and Representative-elect Pablo Garcia of Cebu and where the opposition block figures in it. Is it a real fight or just a "*moro-moro*" so that the House coalition can corner both the majority and minority leaderships of the House?

Darlene said the animosity between Garcia and JDV is real. It seems that although Kampi, to which Garcia belongs, and Lakas, headed by JDV, are both part of the ruling coalition, De Venecia junked Garcia and supported his bitter enemy in Cebu. Now Garcia wants to return the favor. He would like nothing better than to beat JDV and humiliate him.

But that does not solve the problem of the opposition bloc. Under House rules, the candidate who ends up second in the speakership fight automatically becomes the minority leader. That means either Garcia or De Venecia will become the minority leader. They're both members of the administration coalition. That would result in the anomalous situation of both the majority and the minority leaderships being in the hands of the administration, but the Constitution meant the minority leader to be the head of the opposition in the House. The opposition, with only about 30 members, makes up the third biggest bloc. It could be left out in the cold.

Darlene and Rufus said the loser can waive the minority leadership in favor of the opposition leader, and that Garcia, who is courting opposition votes, told them that he is "amenable" to such an agreement.

* * *

Alumni of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (Philets) and the College of Arts and Letters (Artlets) will hold a reunion and election of officers at the Quezon City Sports Club on E. Rodriguez Avenue, on June 22 starting at 10 a.m. Golden jubilarians are members of Class 1957. Golden Owl Awards will be given to outstanding achievers.

My personal revenge

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JACKSON BROWNE HAS A SONG I PARTICUlarly like. It was originally written by Tomas Borge, a Sandinista who was blindfolded and tortured for 18 months in Somoza's jails and whose wife was gang-raped by soldiers. The song is called "My Personal Revenge." Some parts of it (translation by Jose Calderon) give you an idea of where he is going:

"My personal revenge will be the right/Of our children in the schools and in the gardens…/My personal revenge will be to tell you good morning/ On a street without beggars or homeless/ When instead of jailing you I suggest/ You shake away the sadness there that blinds you/ And when you who have applied your hands in torture/ Are unable to look up at what surrounds you/ My personal revenge will be to give you/ These hands that once you so mistreated/ But have failed to take away their tenderness."

It's an astounding concept of a "personal" revenge, given the depths of bitterness the author must have felt over the ordeal he had to endure. But it's not just the awesome Christian turning-the-other cheek that makes it wondrous. It is also that, completely practically, or pragmatically, or politically, it is the only complete and satisfying revenge there is. The only way to punish a tyrant who has oppressed a land is to regale him with a land freed from oppression and a people enjoying peace and prosperity. That is driving a stake into the heart of Dracula.

The only personal revenge against a tyrant that works is the personal revenge that becomes the national revenge. There is no other. Torturing a tyrant, or worse oppressing the country, in turn, is trying to kill Dracula with darkness.

I first used this concept during Cory's time. I said then that the reason the country was having problems punishing, or even prosecuting, the Marcoses and their cronies—indeed the reason the cronies came back with impunity—was that the personal revenge exacted by those that came after them was, well, too personal. The personal revenge of the Cory government against the Marcoses was to steal back what the Marcoses had stolen from the people. The personal revenge of the Cory government against the Marcoses was to regale them with a land that did not teem with milk and honey but with blood and vigilantes.

The only way you can punish a tyrant is with the people's anger. It takes an aggrieved nation to prosecute a tyrant, not a handful of selfish individuals with scores to settle. What enabled the Marcoses to come back was not the lack of a case or cases against them, it was the waning of public interest in prosecuting them. It is not easy to be angry at an old tyranny, or even remember it, when you are in the throes of a new one.

What was true then is truer today. To begin with, GMA had no reason to be bitter at the Erap government. Unlike Cory, she never personally suffered in its hands; she even profited from it. She never had cause to harbor a grudge that she needed to subsume under, or fuse with, the national one. By rights, in complete gratefulness to those who had risked life and limb to put her in power, indeed to give back to a nation that had given so much to her, she had the obligation to inflict the kind of "personal revenge" Borge speaks of, forcing the former rulers to recoil in pain from the laughter of children wafting from schools and gardens and the sight of streets bereft of whores and beggars.

She did not. She foisted a worse tyranny than the one she found.

The reason for these perorations is that I find myself no longer assailed by the prospect of Erap being released from jail. I was one of those who assailed him for his corruption, which went beyond the theft of money to the theft of morals, particularly given the shape, form and appearance of the Midnight Cabinet, as ugly a collection of goons and villains as the ones that graced Erap's own movies. I was the first to call for him to be impeached, when he closed down the Manila Times and called for an ad boycott of the INQUIRER, long before the idea percolated in the minds of Manny Villar and his fellow congressmen. And I was one of those who rejoiced when he was jailed for malfeasance, imagining that a new day, gray and overcast that it was, had dawned.

I still believe that crime may not be made to pay. I still believe that two wrongs do not make a right, and that "if everybody cheats anyway," as some bishops say, that is not an excuse for GMA to rule, that is an imperative for all cheaters to go to jail. But there's something to be said as well for selective justice.

Erap may have robbed, but he did not make this country the most corrupt in Asia. GMA has. Erap may have stolen morals along with money, wrecking this country's concept of right and wrong, but he did not break this country's spirit completely, making right wrong and wrong right, punishing good and rewarding evil. GMA has. Indeed, Erap may have pillaged and pillaged big, but he did not steal the most valuable of the citizen's possessions, which is his vote, and the most precious of any human being's property, which is his life. GMA has.

For Erap to continue to languish in jail for his sins is for a pauper to rot in a pit for stealing a loaf of bread while a politician enjoys the fruits of his plunder. I grant Erap is not a pauper and what he stole is not a loaf of bread, not in absolute terms. But he is so compared to the height and depth, the length and breadth, of what GMA has done, a ransacking not just of this country's material wealth but of its human essence. No, these days I do not find myself assailed by the thought that Erap would be free to reunite with his harem.

I'll just wait for the day when we may exact our personal revenge on the one that has deeply wronged us.

Pinoy English assailed

COMMENTARY

Isabel T. Escoda

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF HONG KONG'S main newspaper, the South China Morning Post, last month was titled "A quest for justice against racist remarks." It was written by an irate Filipino mother who said that her 9-year-old daughter returned home from school one day saying that her teacher had told the class they should not pick up English from their Filipino maids "because their English is not good, especially their accents."

The mother (who pointed out that her maid was once a math teacher and helps her daughter with her homework) said she went to confront the teacher and complain that her daughter was "especially perturbed because I am a Filipina." She informed the teacher of her own profession as a lecturer in English literature at a Hong Kong university.

As in other Asian countries with predominantly Chinese populations, racism toward Southeast Asian migrant workers exists in various forms in Hong Kong. Middle- and upper-class Chinese generally prefer their children to learn English from British, Canadian or American teachers. This language snobbery, which includes an attitude about the desirability of English or American accents, seems deeply ingrained.

Soon after the Filipina's letter appeared, a sociology professor at a local college reacted by confirming that Hongkongers often hold negative stereotypes about the foreign workers in their midst, but she pointed out that busy parents often harbor "unacknowledged feelings of guilt and anger" because they abdicate their parental roles and let their domestics do the job. The result of all this, she said, is a "debilitating hostility" in Hong Kong's multiracial community.

Prior to this exchange, a well-known Hong Kong blogger wrote a scathing piece about rampant racism and skewed attitudes in the territory. Calling Hongkongers "the most pathetically unChinese of all the Chinese within greater China," he said this was "a direct result of having been politically, culturally, mentally and physically humiliated, occupied, transformed, corrupted and remade into WOGS (Westernised Oriental Gentlemen) for more than 150 years by the British colonialists." Hongkongers, he concluded, are "characterless souls with a remarkably positive affiliation towards their former oppressors." He then listed local "weird behaviours" such as "the mindless adoptions of uncharacteristic Western Christian names; the aping by society's upper echelons of their former tormentors' speech and behavior; the misguided admiration of everything Western; the curiously strange hostility toward everything from Mainland China (and neighboring countries); the terribly twisted admiration for the English language which degrades the use of their own national language; and the lack of urgency to demolish all vestiges of the shameful and humiliating British influences—street names, Christian schools, Commonwealth-related ceremonies, etc."

The blogger has a point, because when the colony reverted to China in 1997, there was no urge among legislators or the general populace to change the names of roads like Robinson, Hennesy, Des Veoux & Connaught or to remove the statues of Queen Victoria and King George VI, which are still prominently displayed in the city's major parks.

In other Asian countries colonized by the British, old names have been expunged and changed to those of national patriots. But UK's English-language legacy flourishes in countries like Malaysia, Singapore and India, where distinct ways of speaking the Queen's (and earlier, the King's) English has produced "Chinglish" and the like. A shining example of the triumph of English is India, which has produced world-class writers, as well as speakers with a linguistic dexterity and a literary panache equal to any British writers.

And so when Hong Kong schoolteachers warn students against inadvertently acquiring Filipino accents, we wonder why our own peculiar ways of handling today's universal lingua franca is sometimes denigrated, unlike the case in other countries which have developed their own English speech patterns.

Unwittingly, that Filipina letter-writer highlighted the disparity between the general mass of Pinoys and individuals like herself who make up the minority educated elite. The vast majority of her compatriots, mainly migrant workers, don't use the "received English" acceptable to the language sticklers. A native-born English speaker wouldn't employ the Pinoy term "actuation" when they mean act or action, or "anomaly" for a crime or illegality, since that's not how it's defined in the Oxford Dictionary.

Pinoy inventiveness with English can be seen in the quaint "For a while" reply which receptionists use with callers.

Pinoy syntax transforms verbs, as in "I GOT five children in the Philippines," or "Do you LIKE to go to the house of Mel now?" or "I WILL BE THE ONE to do that."

Grammar can likewise take surprising turns, as in "I already do that yesterday," or "My boss give me my salary last week," or "Can you take your passport here tomorrow?"

Then there are the unique pronunciations as in KOOLchoor (culture), canDIDacy (candidacy), CAYshire (cashier) and CAYbin (cabin).

Indeed, as a foreign writer once said about Pinoy English, "The creative confusion between language and culture leads to more than just simple unintentional errors in syntax, but in the adoption of new words." With some 10 percent of the population working abroad, in the constant struggle to survive, Filipinos' bizarre ways of using English have sometimes been denigrated. At the same time, they have been a unique source of humor for foreigners and Filipinos alike.

Isabel T. Escoda has written about Filipinos in Hong Kong in her books, "Letters from Hong Kong," "Hong Kong Postscript" and "Pinoy Abroad," her latest.

A time of flux

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS WE OBSERVE THE SECOND DEATH ANNIversary tomorrow of Jaime Cardinal Sin, the local Catholic Church finds itself in a state of flux and transition. A number of Catholic bishops have reached retirement age and have submitted their resignations, although it is up to the authorities in the Vatican to decide whose resignation they will accept and whom they will keep in their posts.

From what I remember, a number of bishops and priests in Manila were quite disappointed when Cardinal Sin's pro forma resignation upon his 75th birthday was immediately accepted by the Vatican. True, the cardinal was ailing and had in fact been undergoing regular dialysis. But many had thought that, given the state of his health, the Vatican would allow him to stay in office until his demise, even if it meant appointing a bishop to fulfill his administrative duties even as he remained as titular head of the Manila archdiocese.

The cardinal thus spent his final years in quiet retirement in Villa San Miguel, which his successor, now Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, had graciously allowed him to use as a retirement residence. Still, it must have been painful for the cardinal to have to live out the last years of his life as just a symbol and honorary figure, no longer a central player in the affairs of the nation or even of the archdiocese. I remember how he had struggled to be allowed to travel to Rome despite his ill health so he could take part in the selection of the new pope upon Pope John Paul II's death. This is, after all, the major duty of a cardinal, and one he evidently sought to fulfill despite the difficulties presented.

* * *

AS of this writing, at least three prelates have turned or will turn 75 years old. Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal turned 75 last year but the Vatican has yet to name his successor. The Manila archbishop, who is currently on a tour of the United States upon the invitation of the Fil-Am community before he proceeds to Rome for a meeting of cardinals, turns 75 in August, although former Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz has said he very much doubts if Rosales' resignation will be accepted.

Cruz has himself submitted his resignation even if he is only 73. In an interview, he said he was looking forward to going back to his "first love"—farming—and to traveling. He didn't say anything, though, about his plans of pursuing, if any, his crusade against the illegal numbers game *jueteng*. Or could this crusade, for which he has earned the enmity of very powerful people, be the reason Cruz is retiring early?

There has been, in the last few years, a seemingly deliberate move on the part of the Church to shy away from political involvement, beyond issuing bromides against corruption and in support of democracy. There is also a palpable diminution in the influence the Church wields over secular affairs, though I don't know if this is the Catholic hierarchy's fault or the result of a deliberate indifference on the part of civil authorities and of "compassion and action fatigue" on the part of the faithful. What remains clear is that, by either choice or happenstance, no Church leader has so far stepped up to the plate to take Sin's place as a voice of the oppressed and conscience of a nation.

* * *

IT was while fulfilling this role, particularly in the tumultuous post-Ninoy Aquino assassination years, that Sin came in for his share of withering criticism. There were those who said the cardinal had overstepped his bounds, and that the local Church as a whole had strayed from its mission of providing spiritual solace and moral guidance to "meddling" in the affairs of state.

But recall the situation in those days—and the similar scenario we see evolving. Extra-judicial killings and almost-routine violations of human rights then (and now) called for the Church to stand on the side of righteousness. For what sort of solace and guidance could the bishops provide if they would not or could not articulate what constituted right and wrong, sinful and just?

Perhaps it was Sin's simplicity of person and clear-headed approach to his calling as shepherd of the Manila archdiocese that helped him respond to the call of the times the way he did. True, his declared policy of "critical collaboration" with the Marcos regime left the more radical elements of the Church confused and disappointed. But on hindsight, we see that it allowed him and the rest of the Church to continue negotiating with Marcos even as they sought to make incremental gains on the human rights front.

* * *

BUT when the crisis came to a head, when Marcos called for a snap election and when he sought to steal the result, it was the cardinal's voice that resounded and called for "People Power."

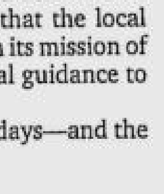
Sin would wield his influence and power many times in the years to follow, mainly when the ideals of democracy were threatened or mocked. But one never sensed any hesitancy or doubt or even compromise on his part, as one does today among the assemblage of bishops.

Perhaps this is what we miss most about Sin, two years after his passing: the surety of his convictions, the courage to act when his advisers and conscience told him, and his humility in the face of popular acclaim or even fawning praise. He would also, I am sure, have come up with zinging one-liners to describe the current situation, leavening a political crisis with his trademark humor.

The public is invited to the memorial Mass for Cardinal Sin tomorrow, June 21 at 8 a.m. at the Manila Cathedral, with Bataan Bishop Socrates Villegas, who had served the cardinal faithfully as a personal secretary, as the main celebrant.

The Hamas moment

WORLD VIEW



Barry Rubin

HAMAS' CAPTURE OF THE GAZA STRIP HAS created, along with Iran, a second radical Islamist state in the Middle East. The region, probably the Arab-Israeli conflict, and certainly the Palestinian movement, will never be the same.

Fatah's defeat in Gaza is not due to American foreign policy, Israel, or anyone but Fatah itself. It is Yasser Arafat's ultimate legacy, for he encouraged not only terrorist violence against Israel, but also anarchy and corruption within his own organization.

Most importantly, Arafat failed to resolve the conflict or give his people an alternative vision to one of extreme radicalism and endless fighting. By rejecting a compromise peace solution in 2000 that would have created an independent Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem and $23 billion in international aid, Arafat made clear that there would be no alternative, moderate scenario for resolving the Palestinians' problems.

It was clear before the January 2006 elections that Hamas was heading toward a victory. Under weak leadership, Fatah did nothing to address its deep-seated divisions and corruption. Competing Fatah candidates split the vote, ensuring that Hamas nominees won. Even after the defeat, Fatah implemented not a single reform or leadership change. Its leaders squabbled, regarding themselves as the sole possible rulers and engaging in wishful thinking that some external factor would hand them whatever they wanted.

Meanwhile, like communist and fascist parties in the past, Hamas moved forward, with a clear doctrine, relative discipline and grim determination. Fatah's ideology and practice laid the basis for Hamas to advance. With Fatah demonizing Israel, rejecting compromise, demanding total victory, glorifying terrorist violence and portraying moderation as treason, Hamas merely needed to prove that it was better at pursuing this course.

No one should underestimate Hamas' extremism. Indeed, the only difference between Hamas and al-Qaida is that the latter emphasizes attacks on Western targets, while the former has until now focused on Israel.

Consequently, Hamas will not moderate its stance, and its victory sets back the chances of Israel-Palestinian peace for decades. Buoyed by its triumph, enjoying backing from Syria and Iran, Hamas will pursue its genocidal and openly stated goal: the extinction of Israel and its people. Any thought of concession or compromise is gravely mistaken.

Four specific issues now move to center-stage: the fate of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the future of the Fatah-ruled West Bank, the world's attitude toward Israel and the strategic impact of Hamas' victory on the Middle East.

Until now, while Gazans have suffered from the constant fighting and economic failures brought about by their leaders' policies, they have been left alone in their private lives. Hamas might go slower or faster with an "Islamicizing" program. Nevertheless, it is determined to transform the lives of those it rules. It will kill as it chooses, abolish women's rights and indoctrinate schoolchildren with hatred and the ambition to be suicide bombers.

Gaza has suffered from anarchy; now it will be under the heel of a ruthless dictatorship. For example, when Hamas forces seized the Shati refugee camp, they executed three women—two teenagers and a 75-year-old—because they were relatives of Fatah officials. Those truly concerned with the Palestinians' well-being should direct their criticism at that people's leaders and seek to protect their human rights in the Gaza Strip.

Fatah's rule is still strong in the West Bank, but even the Gaza catastrophe is unlikely to lead it to change its ways. Israel's willingness to work with Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah regime and resumption of full-scale aid by the United States are intended to consolidate a relatively moderate Palestinian government on the West Bank. But, whereas Abbas appointed Salam Fayyad, a veteran economist who is respected in the West, as his new prime minister, he probably should have picked someone capable of being tough, organizing his forces and fighting back.

Logically, Fatah should now embrace moderation, crack down on cross-border terrorism and seek some kind of peace with Israel. But Fatah has its own view of what is logical—one that might not coincide with such prescriptions. As wildly different as the two cases are, Fatah resembles the French monarchy before the revolution, incapable of learning from experience or taking the steps needed to avoid its own downfall. The world cannot save Fatah; only Fatah can save itself.

For Israel, of course, developments in Gaza pose a great challenge. Israel has long since decided that it has no interest in renewing its control over the Gaza Strip. In some ways, Hamas' coup makes things clearer. Gaza is ruled by a completely hostile regime. Israel will feel free to retaliate for cross-border attacks and continuing rocket fire at civilian targets within the country.

At last, the world must recognize that the hopes stirred by the 1990s peace process have been completely dashed. In effect, Hamas has returned the conflict to the 1960s and 1970s, when progress toward peace had to await the PLO's readiness to stop using terrorism and accept Israel's existence. Israel's survival and right to self-defense now has to be supported internationally, and the slander and demonization of recent years should come to an end. *Project Syndicate*

Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs Center and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal.

Two speeches

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

TWO FINE SPEECHES BY TWO YOUNG FILIPINOS HAVE been going around the Internet and receiving praise everywhere they are posted, but I thought I'd still feature them for those who might have missed them and to do a bit of boasting about UP, about Chinoys and about our young people in general.

The two speeches are Mikaela Irene Fudolig's valedictory delivered at the University of the Philippines Diliman's commencement exercises last April while the other one was Oscar Franklin Barcelona Tan's speech at the Harvard Law School commencement exercises last June 7.

I see the speeches as useful reading materials for our schools at high school and college levels, for social studies or history, or even for writing classes. We have a tendency in the Philippines to equate good speeches (and good writing) with the pompous, the flowery, the obscure. Fudolig and Tan's speeches are brief and to the point, yet rich in their insights.

Trailblazing

Let's start with Fudolig's speech, "Take not the road less traveled" (http://www.upd.edu.ph/%7Eupdinfo/Pagtatapos07/mikispch.htm). Fudolig herself is a wonder, graduating with a degree in BS Physics, summa cum laude, at the age of 16. Like a true scientist, she starts out with an observation about how UP Diliman students can't seem to stay on the pavement when they walk: "From every street corner that bounds an unpaved piece of land, one will espy a narrow trail that cuts the corner, or leads from it. Every lawn around the buildings sports at least one of these paths."

Fudolig presents several hypotheses: Are UP students trying to cut down on traveling to save on the cost of shoes or slippers? Are UP students so "enamored of mathematics and Phythagoras" and triangles? Are UP students just "naturally countercultural," always ready to defy the order of things? Or are UP students just a model of Filipino youth today: "they want everything easier, faster, now"?

Fudolig proposes these mysterious trails reflect the UP students' "pioneering, defiant and brave spirit." After all, the trails weren't always "walkable" so there was some risk, even snakes (smile), for those who dared venture into uncharted territory.

All that was a clever metaphor of the choices for UP graduates. Sent out into the world, will the new graduates choose to migrate, or go for the "immediate monetary benefits in some low-end outsourcing jobs"? Such decisions, she says, are similar to the sidewalks and pavements, the paths that are "easiest to take."

"Be brave," she exhorts her fellow graduates. "Defy the pressure to lead a comfortable, but middling life. . . Take not the road less traveled." She admits that "talk is cheap" and offers to place herself in the service of the university, and asks graduates to join her to "trample a new path."

I couldn't help thinking about how Fudolig herself is a product too of UP's trailblazing. I'm referring to the university's still experimental early college placement program (ECPP) for gifted children. Fudolig began taking courses at the university in the summer of 2002, when she was only 11. She was still studying at the Quezon City Science High School but was allowed to take university-level courses in math, chemistry, English, history and biology, a kind of transition period. The following school year, she entered UP as a freshman. The experimental program provided that safety transitory period, as well as close guidance to gifted students, even while encouraging their independence. They are also sheltered from the media and any kind of publicity, and are treated like any other student.

World citizens

The other speech comes from Oscar Franklin Barcelona Tan, a Chinoy (Chinese-Filipino) who has a law degree from UP (Class of 2005) and was working for a master's degree at Harvard Law School. There are actually two versions circulating in the Internet. One, posted on the Internet site of GMA-7, has the title "The Law of the Good Man as Our Generation's Law" (http://www.gmanews.tv/story/45413/Young-Filipino-lawyer-addresses-Harvard-law-grads). A shorter one, which was e-mailed to me, is entitled "Like Wine in the River, Like Citizens of the World."

There are a few differences between the two versions. The longer one has him acknowledging his father, lawyer Edmundo L. Tan, who struggled through a poor childhood in Negros Occidental making it into UP's law school, and his second father, Raul Pangalangan, former dean of UP's College of Law (and fellow columnist here in the INQUIRER).

The speech begins with a generous dose of humor, of partying and drinking without the debauchery (sample: "Soon, we found that great substance that keeps any law school together: alcohol. On New Year's Eve, a Belarussian handed me a glass of vodka, but scolded me when I began to sip it. . .") He describes their quest for common ground, which was complaining about American chocolate, American cheese, American tea, American food.

The quest becomes serious, as he describes meeting people from countries struggling with human rights and democracy. And as he thanks Harvard for their brilliant professors and powerful ideas, he acknowledges that the passion he and his classmates have comes from realizing "that our peers in faraway lands face the same frustrations, the same nation building ordeals, the same sorrows, and ultimately, the same shared joys and triumphs."

The longer version of the speech talks about how international law can bolster and expand concepts of rights. He asks: "How can rights to biodiversity be asserted given an intellectual property regime that allows Indian basmati rice to be patented in a key export market? How can rights to environment become reality given developing countries with large populations and meager resources?" He wonders how nations can dialogue when the terms are not equal, citing as an example the case of the American soldier convicted of rape in the Philippines but detained at the US Embassy.

Wine returns, but this time with a vignette from China about the legendary Yue king, Gou Jian. Presented with fine wine, he ordered his troops to stand by a river into which he poured the liquor, his way of sharing the gift with the troops. Tan notes: "A bottle of wine cannot flavor a river, but the gesture so emboldened his army that they won a great victory. We of the Class of 2007 shall flavor this earth, whether we be vodka, wine, champagne. . . Irish stout, Ugandan warabi or Philippine lambanog."

Tan closes with a call on his American classmates "who will soon lead the world's lone superpower" to "transcend our individual nationalities and affirm that we are citizens of the world."

Fudolig's quiet speech speaks of quietly engaging a world that is UP and, hopefully, the country, of educating the next generation. Tan takes on the world with boldness and fervor and talks of how his generation defines the law by the good (i.e. ethical) man (and woman). Both have their messages for young Filipinos who will increasingly find themselves citizens of a nation, and of the world.

Misplaced executive clemency

ONLY A YEAR AGO, THE PHILIPpines was featured on CNN for keeping hundreds of children in prison cells in abysmal conditions. A year later, in the name of humanitarianism, the Arroyo administration announces it is granting executive clemency to rape convict Romeo Jalosjos, a former congressman—as if his fully furnished prison cell, the lavishly cooked meals and all other special treatment he is getting "behind prison bars" aren't humane enough for him.

I have been to several city jails, as well as to the New Bilibid Prisons. I believe there are thousands of prisoners who deserve, more than Jalosjos, to be pardoned and to enjoy liberty once again—the elderly, those who were driven to commit an isolated criminal act by sheer poverty, and those who have truly been repentant and have proven themselves worthy of clemency after long years of incarceration. Even greater in number are those who do not deserve to be in prison, to begin with—the children (under the Child and Youth Welfare Code they should have an automatic suspension of sentence); and those who have been detained for more than the allowable maximum penalty imposed by law for the offenses they allegedly committed, but because of the slow wheels of justice, they have yet to face trial.

If the Department of Justice and the President are serious about being "humanitarian," then they should address the issues plaguing our penal system, enforce a genuinely rehabilitative program for the children who come in conflict with the law so they do not grow up to be hardened criminals, and order their immediate release instead of letting go of the least deserving, most unworthy and scummiest convicted felons.

It is bad enough that a former lawmaker violated the very trust the public reposed in him by breaking the law which he swore to uphold; it is worse that he should commit a crime considered by civilized nations as most despicable—raping a child.

What sort of message is sent to his victim who was then 11 years old, and to our society? That all one needs to do, after raping a child, and without even serving the minimum sentence, is just to give his province's overwhelming support to the President's candidates; then he is sure his jail term will be commuted. I wonder if the President would be half as willing to overlook such repulsive behavior and be as forgiving if the so-called pitiful offender who is in dire need of humanitarianism committed the crime against a very close relative of hers.

—HERXILIA G. ALVAREZ,
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Campus politics as an opportunity for educating voters

NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE MAY 14 elections have been attended with allegations of fraud. Which of our elections in the past had none anyway? Cheating, vote-buying, mudslinging and all sorts of electoral chicanery have always marred every election in our country, thus thwarting the sovereign will in many instances, too many for comfort.

But this is not a hopeless situation. We can correct it, and let us begin by educating our people about clean and honest elections. Let us start with our school and campus politics.

With the advent of a new school year, our students will soon be electing their classroom and campus officers. This is a most opportune time to introduce them to clean politics. Well-meaning teachers can guide students to shy away from dirty campaign tactics and the unprincipled ways of traditional politicians. Campus politics should be a training ground for student leaders who, in the future, might want to serve our country as public officials.

Lastly, I suggest that the Local Government Code of 1991 be included in the list of mandated school subjects, just like the Constitution is now. This will make would-be leaders of our country understand the immense work and responsibility that come with being elected as a public official

—REGINALD B. TAMAYO,
member, Sangguniang Bayan,
Aparri, Cagayan

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Questions about US jabs at Iran

ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE IN the June 24 issue of Newsweek, US President George Bush Jr. expects a bloody summer in Iraq due to a growing covert war between the United States and Iran. Tehran purportedly supports Iraqi insurgents through a super-secret unit called Department 9000, which is allegedly part of the elite Quds force of the Iranian Islamic revolutionary guards corps. This elite unit reportedly supports a clandestine liaison between Shiite insurgents and IRGC, Iran's main internal security arm.

President Bush approved a secret order authorizing the CIA to harass but not to overthrow the Iranian regime.

Is the Bush administration serious in pursuing a regime change in Iran? Is it just saber-rattling and is it part of psyops to neutralize the unity and expansionism of the Shiites in the Middle East?

Why telegraph its punches? In a successful intrusion, the element of surprise is a must, like what the United States did to Libya in effectively neutralizing Gadhafi.

Could this be the "chicken hawks war policy" to prolong the battle, like what they did to Saddam Hussein and Iraq? Or is it a way to drag other nation-states to support Iran's fight against the American establishment?

The Newsweek deliberate leak could also be an exposé by patriots in the US media, a déjà vu of Pulitzer Prize awardee and veteran writer-reporter Jack Anderson's exposing former President Richard Nixon's lies about the US tilt in the India-Pakistan war.

—DR. ERICK SAN JUAN, DLttrs.,
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Concerns re CARE projects clarified

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE news report titled "Overprice fears hound P1.2-B Bicol fund." (INQUIRER, 5/22/07)

May we clarify that the P1.2 billion allotment intended for projects under the Calamity Assistance and Rehabilitation Effort (CARE) was received only on April 27, 2007 and was subsequently released to the 13 DPWH district engineering offices in Region 5.

According to DPWH regional director Orlando B. Roces, the regional and district offices prepared the plans and programs of work based on the current prevailing prices. Roces assured that overpricing will never happen since the project will be bid out publicly.

Also, the prices offered by the winning contractors will be evaluated thoroughly by the Bids and Awards Committee and will be reviewed by the Commission on Audit. The implementation of the projects will be closely coordinated with the concerned local government units and other concerned government agencies, including non-government organizations, for utmost transparency.

—ELIZABETH P. PILORIN,
officer in charge,
Public Information Division,
Department of Public Works
and Highways, Manila

Comelec delay courting public wrath

"LAND TO THE TILLER, STOP COAL mining, and stop cassava plantation projects!" This was the cry of the peasant-dominated province of Isabela as farmers trooped to the polls last May 14, hoping to translate their dreams into reality.

Even though irregularities marred the just concluded elections in Isabela, as what happened in previous ones, the Isabelinos are convinced that they were able to clearly register their voice in the polls. Has the Lord heard the cry of the poor people of Isabela? The Isabelinos have decided that it is Grace Padaca who will work in solidarity with the poor in dismantling the structures of oppression and suffering that have confined our people for decades and in exposing the greed of the elite.

We commend the people for doing their part. Guided by its moral duty, the Church did not let its guard down to ensure that the votes would be counted fair and square. We thank the Church for serving as our guiding light in our struggle to solidify the Isabelinos' previous victories.

On the allegation that Padaca engaged in dirty tricks to ensure her reelection, we can only ask: *Nandaya si* Grace Padaca? Is she capable of cheating? *Sino ang may kakayahang mamera at may kakayahang manunog ng munisipyo* (Who has the capability to buy votes and burn a town hall)?

We have been witness to the sins of the Comelec in the past when it thwarted the will of the Isabelinos. We again challenge Comelec officials: Use your conscience, be guided by your moral obligation. Why the delay in the proclamation? Is it for the people? As far as I can remember, the last time we fought tooth and nail to defend democracy in Isabela, many lives were sacrificed on the altar of political change. We can still hear the cries for justice for those who were felled by assassins' bullets.

The voice of the people is the voice of God! Will the Comelec listen instead to the voice of the devil?

We, Isabelinos who belong to religious orders based in Manila, are closely watching the Comelec and calling on it to prove to the people of Isabela that it respects even the voice of the marginalized. The progressive Church is observing the situation.

We warn the Comelec: In refusing to heed the cry of the people of Isabela, it is courting public wrath. We warn the Comelec of the gathering storm.

To Grace Padaca, the religious congregations are also looking at you. Hear the cry of the oppressed people of Isabela.

—REV. FR. JERRY
SABADO, O. Carm.,
chair, Kagimongan dagiti
Relihioso ken
Relihiosa iti Isabela,
founding member, Isabela Care,
26 Acacia St. New Manila, QC

Rice a national security issue

THIS REFERS TO YOUR NEWS article titled "DBM urges shift in agri department's rice policy." (INQUIRER, 6/4/07)

The Department of Budget and Management obviously overstepped its mandate when it directed the Department of Agriculture to reduce the budget support for rice production. Clearly, the DBM is missing the bigger picture. What the DBM sees as "costly intervention" is actually a matter of national security.

No sane government surrenders control over its people's primary staple. The trend in the international rice market shows shrinking supply and expanding demand, especially when the demand from rice-importing countries like China has been causing a spike in global rice prices. Clearly, a reliance on rice imports could prove dangerous.

Rather than reducing government support for agriculture, government should further increase it. Agricultural power houses, like Thailand and Vietnam, didn't get to where they are now by abandoning the agriculture sector. Instead they poured public investments into their agriculture. We would do well to emulate their example.

The government has been reducing its support for agriculture for years. It is high time we got serious about agriculture modernization and provided the requisite funding support. Achieving rice self-sufficiency is not "illusory" as the DBM claims. Data show that the annual production shortfall is only around 10 percent. In fact, between 2002 and 2006, rice production expanded to 14 million metric tons from 12 million metric tons. But, it seems that the DBM had not bothered to check the facts.

The DBM should stick to its mandate and refrain from meddling in matters where it has neither the authority nor the competence. The DBM has no business recommending tariff policy. Its recommendation to slash rice tariffs to 30 percent is ill-advised and goes against government's policy of continued protection for domestic rice production. In fact, we won a major victory in the WTO when we successfully negotiated for the extension of quantitative restrictions on rice imports.

If we really want to save money, perhaps we should reduce the budget for the DBM's bloated bureaucracy and give it to the farmers instead. We guarantee that it will be a wiser use of the people's taxes.

—OMI ROYANDOYAN,
executive director,
Centro Saka Inc.,
Commonwealth Ave.,
Diliman, Quezon City

A small step in long, arduous struggle

WE TAKE NOTE OF THE MURDER cases filed against the soldier-killers of United Methodist minister Isaias Sta. Rosa in Albay. (INQUIRER, 5/29/07) However, we doubt the sincerity of the Arroyo administration in its pursuit of justice. This is so because like in the murder case filed against the killer of Jose "Pepe" Manegdeg III, the Ilocos and Cordillera coordinator of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, the government failed to guarantee the safety of the primary witness in the killing despite its supposed Witness Protection Program. Fearing for his life, the witness was forced to retract his testimony. A military man was identified as the killer.

We believe that the filing of the cases against those behind the extrajudicial killings is only a small step in a long and arduous search for justice, and it is never a real guarantee that justice will be served. After all, it is the US-Arroyo regime which is behind the killings, as reported by Task Force Usig. A killer can never and will never punish himself for crimes he himself committed. It is the Arroyo administration's national policy to eliminate anyone seen as an obstacle or threat to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's insatiable selfish ambitions and lust for power.

We cannot truly conceal our rage as the extrajudicial killings and abductions continue despite local and international pressure on the administration to put an end to them. While this does not surprise us, given Ms Arroyo's fascist bent, we know that the Filipino people will continue fighting for justice for as long as she remains in power, and justice continues to be taken just as a seven-letter word, whose meaning falls on the deaf ears of this tyrannical regime.

—ROD TAJON,
secretary general,
Ilocos Human Rights Advocates
(Ihra-Karapatan),
16 Gomez St., Barangay 4,
Vigan City, Ilocos Sur

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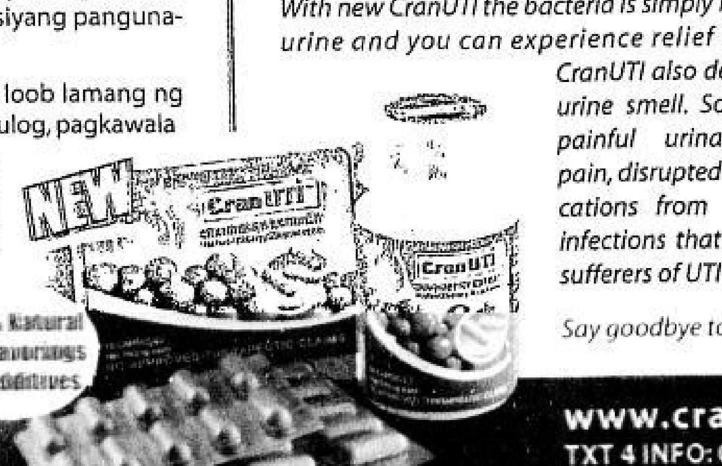

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Palace: Priest not chief negotiator

By Juliet Labog Javellana

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY DENIED THAT Catholic priest Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr. has been appointed chief government negotiator for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front following the abrupt resignation of Silvestre Afable Jr. on Friday.

"I believe the process for a suitable replacement is still in effect and the announcement will be made at the proper time," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters yesterday.

Bunye made the clarification days after Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza announced on Saturday that Mercado would replace Afable as chair of the government peace panel for the talks with the MILF.

Embarrassment

Bunye's clarification could put Mercado in an embarrassing situation since he had welcomed his appointment and had expressed confidence he could contribute to the resolution of the decades-old Bangsamoro problem.

Bunye's clarification also came after the MILF expressed objection to the appointment of Mercado, saying he did not carry the authority of someone like Afable who has a Cabinet rank.

The MILF also said in its website that Dureza and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales eased out Afable, who had been chief peace negotiator since 2003.

Dureza, in an interview on ANC, confirmed that the MILF objection led to the withdrawal of Mercado's appointment.

Dureza blamed

"As you know the MILF is the partner here in the negotiations so we have to make sure that that is something the partner accepts," Dureza said. He said he tried to convince the MILF panel that Mercado is competent to become chief negotiator but that he received a text message yesterday that a reconsideration (of Mercado's appointment) may no longer be possible. He said he would submit new names to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Before Dureza's television interview, Bunye blamed his office for the latest mixup in Malacañang.

"Our announcement was quite clear. There was some confusion because of an announcement coming from another agency which that agency clarified," Bunye said.

Bunye stood by his statement last Saturday confirming the resignation of Afable. He said that day that "there is now a search for his replacement."

But shortly after Bunye issued his statement on Saturday, a statement from Dureza's office was received in media offices saying Mercado is Afable's replacement. Dureza said Mercado is an "experienced peacebuilder in Mindanao" and that his immediate appointment would ensure a "seamless transition" from Afable's resignation.

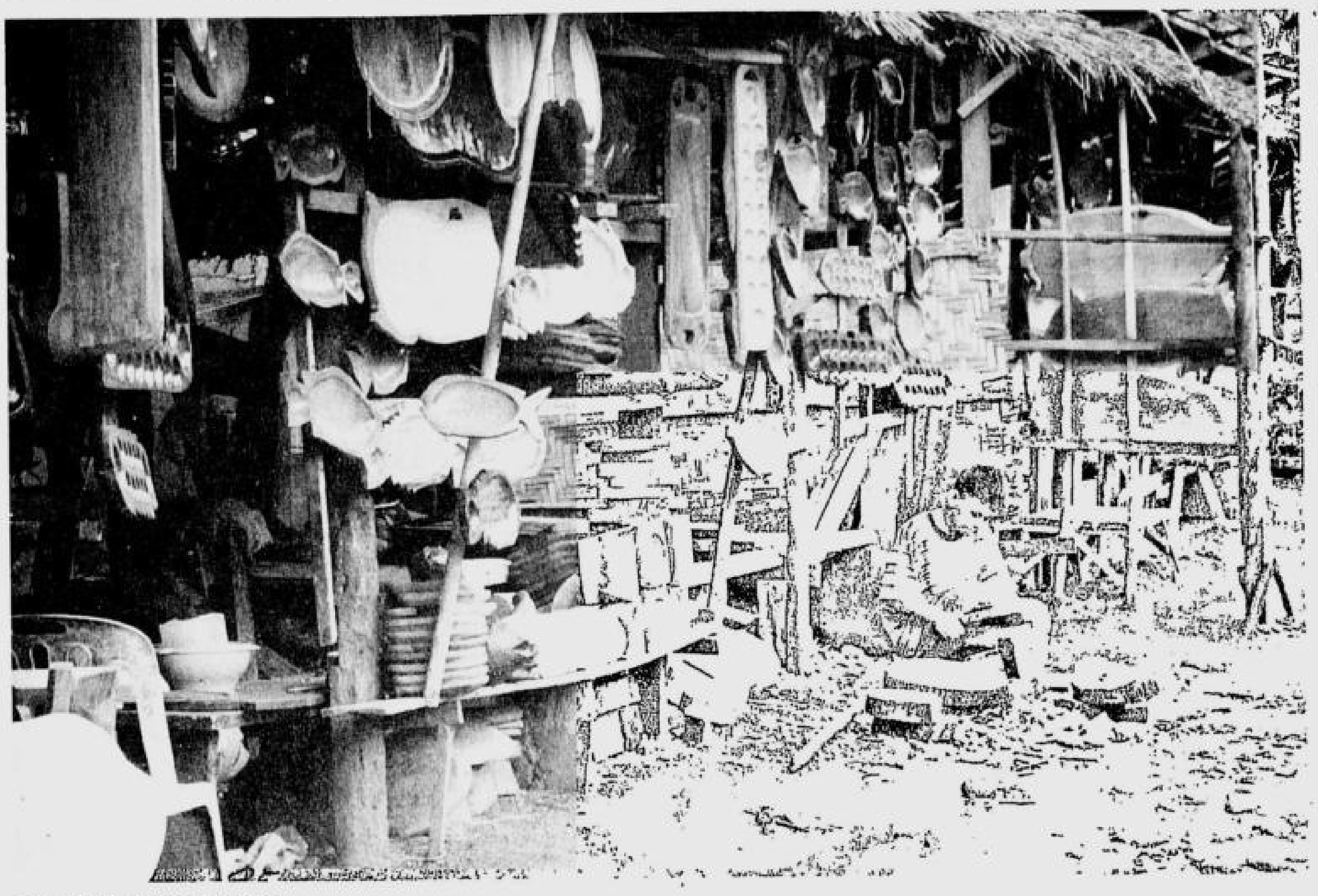
Bunye said Dureza made a clarification about his erroneous announcement the following day. Told by reporters there was none, Bunye said: "This is something we should sort out. I believe Secretary Dureza was the one who made the announcement, he should be the one to make the clarification."

Asked if it meant Dureza was not authorized or was wrong in announcing the replacement, Bunye said: "Please don't put words into my mouth. Let me just say that Secretary Afable has resigned and we're looking for a replacement."

Asked how he did not make the clarification himself when he is the President's spokesperson, Bunye said: "That is correct but this is something that was made by another agency."

Bunye said the resignation of Afable should not disrupt the peace process with the MILF.

"I believe we have made sufficient progress in the peace process which will not be easily set aside by the resignation of Secretary Afable and even after the effectivity of the assignment of the replacement Secretary Afable has committed to act as adviser for the peace panel," Bunye said.



GROWING INDUSTRY
A teenage boy helps in his family's business of wood carving, transforming pieces of wood that had been either thrown as wastes or abandoned into novelty items that the family sells along the national highway in Barangay Tacub, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.
DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Typhoons, polls bring lull to Bondoc

LUCENA CITY—ALL SEEMS TO be quiet these days in the Bondoc Peninsula in southern Quezon province that, in the last five years, saw farmers being abducted, killed or jailed for merely harvesting coconuts.

A report released June 10 by a group of German observers from the International Peace Observer Network (Ipon) noted that no cases of physical harassment against farmers were documented during the first quarter of 2007. Ipon advocates for peace and protection for farmers.

The lack of crops to harvest as a result of the typhoons in December 2006 prevented the interaction between owners and farmers, and the May 14 elections could have made the landowners amicable to the voters—the farmers and their families—resulting in a lull in the agrarian conflict in the area, Ipon noted in its report.

> 'Using the legal system of the Philippines ... can be seen as an effective instrument of harassment...'

Typhoons, elections

"Most of the coconut trees in the Bondoc Peninsula have been severely damaged by the typhoon. Due to this, the next possible harvest will only be in August 2007 ... That means if there is no coconut harvest, there is no sharing of the harvest, which often leads to conflict," the group said.

The Hamburg-based peace advocates also said many of the members of the landowning families ran for different offices during the May 14 elections.

Two sons of the late Don Domingo Reyes, the biggest landlord in Bondoc with about 13,000 hectares in Buenavista, San Andres and San Narciso towns, were both incumbent mayors but lost in the May 14 elections.

Legal harassment

The situation slightly improved, according to Ipon, because the farmers were being organized under the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Bondoc Peninsula (KMBP) which advocates the protection of the rights of peasants in the area.

But while the physical harassment stopped, the harassment through the legal system was continuing, according to Ipon.

"Using the legal system of the Philippines through the filing of criminal cases against farmers can be seen as an effective instrument of harassment by the landowners," Ipon observed.

Systematic

There were 259 criminal cases filed against 380 farmers from San Francisco, San Andres, San Narciso and Mulanay, the group documented. The cases range from theft of coconuts, estafa, libel, trespassing, grave threat, malicious mischief, attempted murder and homicide.

There were also 68 warrants of arrests against farmers of these municipalities, Ipon reported.

On May 7, Ipon accompanied 65 farmers from San Francisco to a hearing on the case of alleged coconut theft filed by a landowner at the regional trial court in Gumaca.

Ipon noted that the number of allegedly stolen coconuts in the case filed was very small and that nobody was present on behalf of the claimant, which was often the case during court hearings that usually lasted no more than 40 minutes.

"This may underline the assumption that the filed case seems to be more of a systematic harassment of the landowner than a real concern," said the group.

The threat of violence was still a problem, Ipon added. "Because many farmers have been forced to stop petitioning, some decided to move to other *sitios* (subvillage) in order to live free from fear of physical attacks."

Most of the farmers in these landholdings have to work under a 60-40, sometimes 75-25 percent sharing system in favor of the landowners, according to an Ipon report. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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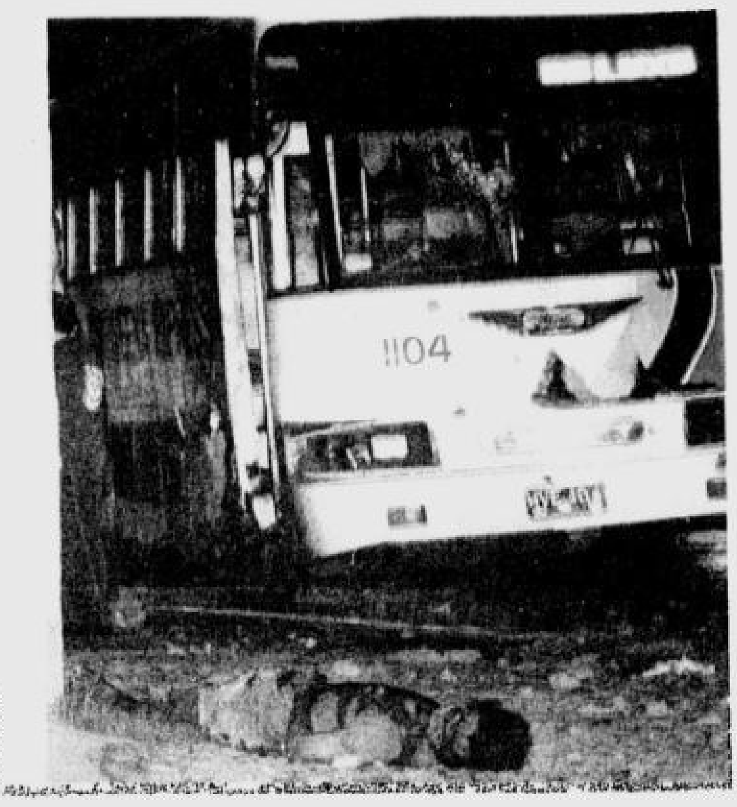

THE BODY of a victim of a bomb explosion in this Weena Bus terminal in Bansalan, Davao del Sur lies beside the target bus. At least eight people were killed here, including this man. Police were still investigating although bus firm officials said they had received extortion letters in the past.

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Cops study labor feud link with bus bombing

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

BANSALAN, DAVAO DEL SUR—Authorities are studying the connection between a labor conflict at a bus firm and the series of bomb attacks on the firm's buses, an Army official said.

The latest attack on the Weena Bus Co. led to the deaths of eight people and injuries to 18 others.

Col. Vicente Porto, commander of the 1002nd Infantry Brigade based in Central Mindanao, said while investigators were not concluding that employees who had been fired by the firm were behind the bombings, they were expanding the scope of the investigation.

"We want to get as many (pieces of) information as we can," he said.

Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said President Macapagal-Arroyo was also keenly monitoring developments in the investigation of the bomb attacks.

"The President would like to know why these ... were happening," said Duterte, Ms Arroyo's adviser on peace and order.

Malacañang stepped in after Weena suspended bus trips for two days.

Abelardo Gamilla, Weena operations manager based in Davao City, said the bus trips resumed after Weena officials got calls from unidentified Malacañang officials.

The latest bomb attack on Friday, the third this month, was initially blamed on extortion syndicates that have been demanding P2.5 million a month in protection money.

But Supt. Conrado Laza, Southern Mindanao deputy police director, said it appears that the explosive used last Friday differed from the one used in the June 8 attack in Matalam, North Cotabato.

The Matalam attack was confirmed to have been staged by a group headed by a certain Barumbado.

Shortly after the Matalam blast, which damaged a Weena bus, Barumbado warned of deadlier explosions if the company failed to give protection money.

Laza said police have not yet determined the exact make of the bomb used last Friday.

US bomb experts helped local authorities investigate what kind of explosive was used.

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) based in Davao City, said the military and the police were working together to determine which group was really involved in the bus bombing.

Cabangbang said the linking of a rogue Moro rebel commander in the attack was not definite yet but added it was based on results of investigation of earlier bomb explosions targeting Weena buses.

"Whether the Bansalan attack was an act of extortionists ... we still don't know. But definitely, it was aimed at terrorizing the people," Caro said.

Duterte said speculations on the identities of the perpetrators would not help in the investigation.

Duterte, who came here Monday to distribute relief goods provided by Malacañang to victims of the explosion, said speculations will only scare people more.

But Duterte agreed that security should be tightened to ensure the safety of commuters.

"Clearly, there were security lapses here," he said as he announced the creation of Oplan Seguridad.

Shortly after the Bansalan explosion, more policemen were sent to bus depots in the region. *Orlando Dinoy and Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*

Guards claim self-defense in hacienda fatal shooting

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—TWO SUSPECTS in the killing of an agrarian reform beneficiary in Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana, Negros Occidental, claimed self-defense when they fired back at Task Force Mapalad (TFM) members involved in a seething land dispute.

Warren Fernandez and Felix Sadiasa, who were among the six guards of Cornerstone Security Agency hired by the hacienda management, surrendered to Senior Supt. Rosendo Franco, provincial police director, at Camp Alfredo Montelibano here on Monday.

The two, along with fellow guard Enrique Maliksi, are facing murder charges for the death of TFM member Alejandro Garcesa in Barangay Robles, La Castellana, on June 4. They all tested positive for gunpowder burns, police said.

Maliksi is detained at the police jail in La Carlota City.

A local affiliate of the TFM, the Hacienda Velez-Malaga Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization, occupied the land formerly owned by Roberto Cuenca after Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman installed them on March 22.

After the DAR failed to conduct a demarcation survey, the farmers decided to go back to the property and start cultivating it, according to a TFM press release issued yesterday.

More charges of murder and multiple frustrated murder are also being readied against the three suspects by the La Castellana police in connection with the death of TFM member Ely Tupas and injuries to six other farmers.

Fernandez said he and the other guards fired warning shots when 60 to 70 TFM members started clearing a five-hectare sugarcane area inside the hacienda.

Some of the TFM members opened fire at them with .38 cal. revolvers and homemade shotguns, while others threw stones, he said. They kept on pursuing the guards even as the latter were leaving the area, he said.

TFM officials denounced the claims of the two guards.

"After two weeks in hiding, they have perfected their scripts but the problem is, the truth can never be hidden," TFM leader Jerry Cajilig said in the statement.

Cahilig said the statements of Soriano and Sadiasa were inconsistent. He said his group had photographs and videos showing that its members did not have any weapons.

Fernandez and Sadiasa will be detained at the La Castellana police jail pending resolution of the criminal complaints against them.

Senior Insp. Regidor Alvarado, La Castellana police chief, said the names of Maliksi, Fernandez and Sadiasa were mentioned in the affidavits of witnesses.

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Lost and found: Kapampangan words

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando

WHAT IS "SIPAN," "LANGOLANGO," "galang," "yubyub," "carangcarang," "amuyam," "lambangan," "limpasut," "talangtalang" and "batanglaua?" Or better still, "aniani," "lualu" or "saclong?"

These are lost Kapampangan words that, like thousands of other terms, had been buried for nearly four centuries in the pages of a twin book by an Augustinian expert on grammar and lexicography.

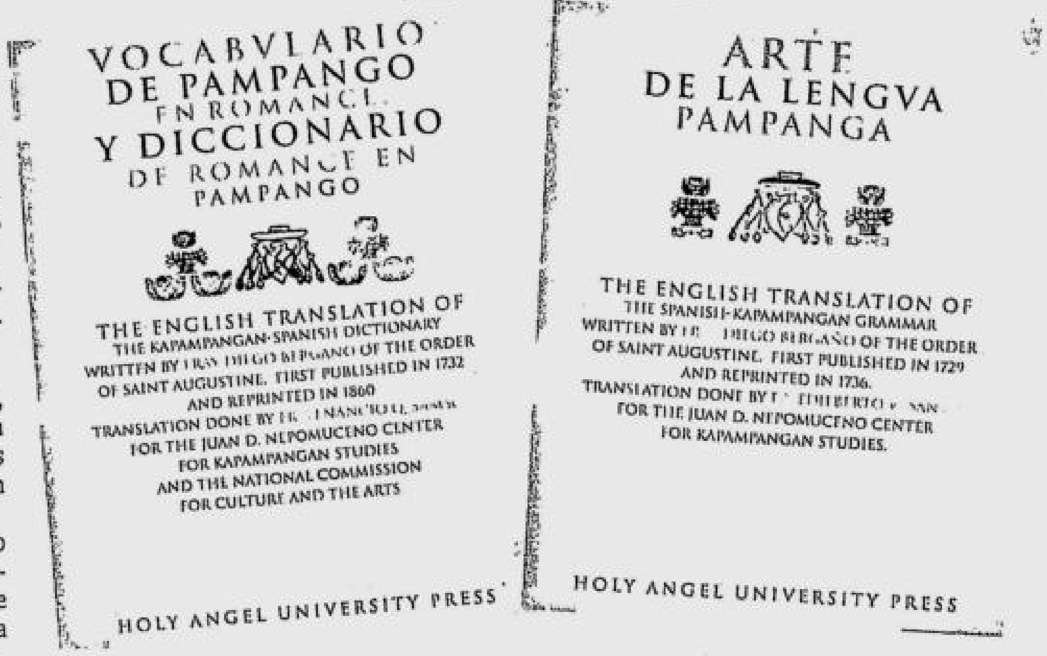
But that was until last month when two Catholic priests in Pampanga—Edilberto Santos and Venancio Samson—completed the translation of Fray Diego Bergaño's "Arte de la Lengua Pampanga (Grammar of the Kapampangan Language, 1729)" and "Vocabulario de Pampango (Kapampangan Vocabulary, 1732)," respectively.

In translating the highly regarded documents, Santos and Samson have ended the exclusivity of Bergaño's works to scholars on account of their being written in Spanish.

Translated into Kapampangan-English and published back-to-back, the friar's works are now easy to decipher by anyone wanting to learn the language or use the rediscovered words in everyday life.

"Bergaño's books can reinvigorate the Kapampangan language by supplying it with thousands of rediscovered words, which is why I consider the translation of these books a real breakthrough in Kapampangan studies," said Robby Tantingco, executive director of the Holy Angel University's Juan D. Nepomuceno Center for Kapampangan Studies in Angeles City.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts is co-publishing the books, which is scheduled for launch on Aug. 24 at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila. The launch, coinciding with the Language Month, is also held in honor of Bergaño who, at 23, joined the Augustinian mission in Manila in 1718.



VOCABVLARIO
DE PAMPANGO
EN ROMANCE
Y DICCIONARIO
DE ROMANCE EN
PAMPANGO

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF
THE KAPAMPANGAN-SPANISH DICTIONARY
WRITTEN BY FRAY DIEGO BERGAÑO OF THE ORDER
OF SAINT AUGUSTINE. FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1732
AND REPRINTED IN 1860
TRANSLATION DONE BY FR. [illegible]
FOR THE JUAN D. NEPOMUCENO CENTER
FOR KAPAMPANGAN STUDIES
AND THE NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

HOLY ANGEL UNIVERSITY PRESS

ARTE
DE LA LENGVA
PAMPANGA

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF
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FOR THE JUAN D. NEPOMUCENO CENTER
FOR KAPAMPANGAN STUDIES.

HOLY ANGEL UNIVERSITY PRESS

COVERS of the two books on Pampango grammar and vocabulary TONETTE OREJAS

Bergaño, a native of Cervera, did not intend to chronicle the words in perpetuity. His own prologue in the vocabulario said: "The most important reason why I undertook this work (writing the Kapampangan-Spanish dictionary) was my desire that, when we explain the word of God, we avoid inappropriate language."

Treasure troves

"They are veritable treasure troves of linguistic and anthropological data," Tantingco said. "He was able to identify the basic, original source word of all derivatives and string them up together under only one word entry, and then explained their interconnectedness. One does not achieve this by merely going around collective words."

The word "buri" (like), for instance, evolves into "paburen" (neglect) and "paburian ye" (leave him alone).

Another, "dabpa" (in today's version: *dagpa*) means "the bird on a perch spreads its wings forming a cross." It can mean "capba" or "an arm's length." It can also mean the idiomatic "dimpa," which means "befell."

A related word is "dipan," as in "Dipan na ca ning alti (May lightning strike you)!" which old folks swore out loud against a person they were angry with.

Bergaño did not do his task single-handedly. He tapped Don Juan Zuñiga of Mexico, Pampanga, to help him in the projects. These were his two of three major works.

The definitor (official) of Augustinians at that time, Fray Vicente Ibarra, said: "This book will finally satisfy the great desire of the ministers of the Gospel to grasp the precise meanings and connotations of those words in order to be able to speak the language correctly."

Indigenous

Tantingco believed the dictionary itself contained "indigenous, even pre-Hispanic, conditions of the Kapampangan language and the Kapampangan themselves, but only to a certain extent."

This was because the priest wrote the book 161 years after the Spanish colonizers arrived in Pampanga. In the absence of mass media, though, the rate of adulteration might have been slow and Bergaño might still have captured the nuances of the old language.

His text showed that the Kapampangan, a riverbank-dwelling people, possessed a sophisticated language as they had words for anything and everything around them.

"Sipan" is toothbrush, "langolango" is toilet, "galang" is bracelet, "yubyub" is barbecue, "carangcarang" is baby walker, "amuyam" is sponge, "lambangan" is rice dispenser, "limpasut" is shark, "talangtalang" is goldfish and "batanglaua" is spider web.

There are numerals from "isa" (one) to "lacsa" (10,000), "gatus" (100,000) and "sangyuta" (a million).

The verb "to cross legs" is "timpo" for women and "sila" for men. As for dance, it is "indac" for women and "terac" for men.

There are terms for times of the day, colors, body parts, family ties, flora and fauna, sex and erotica, as well as etymology of common Kapampangan surnames like "laus" (hole), "tayag" (to lift), "sagum" (to mix drinks), "ibe" (to become intoxicated from chewing betel nut), "canals" (to succeed in office), "abad" (slight wound), "tulabut" (to spurt), "viray" (boat), "calma" (luck) and "suba" (to navigate upstream).

Find also what Tantingco calls quaint words: "payungdaguis" (mushroom, but literally, "mouse's umbrella"), "sulungdaguis" (morning star, "mouse's lamp"), "sabo susu" (milk, "soup from the breast"), "bungang tudtud" (dream, "fruit of sleep"), "pinanari" (rainbow, "king's loincloth"), and "anac sulip" (illegitimate child, "child from the basement").

This was the center's second translation project after the one on Fray Francisco Coronel's "Arte y Reglas de la Lengua Pampanga (1621)."

For reservation of copies of the two books, e-mail rptmt@yahoo.com or call (045) 888-8691 local 1311 or 1312.

Elders still a factor in Benguet politics

By Delmar Cariño
La Trinidad, Benguet

BY TRADITION, BENGUET'S ELders are not kingmakers. Neither are they supposed to be politically active. But their wise and wisdom have always made them politically relevant and no local politician can afford to dispense with their presence.

'The candidate would learn from the elders if he is fit to become a public servant'

Board Member Joseph Cosente, 70, said ignoring elders and their blessings would make a candidate look bad. "To do so would be culturally disrespectful," he said.

"That's why local politicians always find time to consult the elders in their respective villages before deciding to run for public office, especially if it is their first time," he said.

The elders embody a tradition of counsel from the old whose life had been tested, he added.

Cosente, whose politics is marked with his closeness to the *mambunong* (native priest), is just one of local politicians who admitted they consulted the elders during this year's elections.

Take the case of Mankayan Mayor Manalo Galuten, 73, and Kibungan Mayor Murphy Paayas, 74. They are the oldest local executives in the province. Yet when they decided to run for reelection on May 14, they said they still had to knock on the doors of elders despite their age and political experience.

BAGUIO City Rep. Mauricio Domogan (right) and elders and representatives of various tribes in the Cordillera gather for a festival in Baguio. EV ESPIRITU

Blessings

Consulting the elders, most often the *nanakay* (male elders), is to seek their blessings for one's political ambition, Paayas said.

Galuten was more candid. "The candidate would learn from the elders if he is fit to become a public servant," he said.

Dave Molitas, a dzWT radio announcer who ran as councilor in Kibungan town, agreed. So did Benguet Rep. Samuel Dangwa, Vice Gov. Crescencio Pacalso, Kapangan Mayor Rogelio Leon, Tuba Councilor and Vice Mayor-elect Valentino Carantes and Board Member Juan Nazarro Jr.

But will the elders predict a candidates' chance at the polls? Sadly, but that will be rare.

Courtesy call

"The bottom line of consulting the elders is to be blessed with a good start for the campaign. It is also some sort of a courtesy call on them," said Board Member Sario Copas, a Kankanaey and chair of the provincial board's committee on indigenous peoples.

"*Kalien da ida ta say ilaen mo way lawa sin pantagtagan uno ta say mayat di panrubwatan* (We talk to the elders to find out if there are problems on one's political ambition or to start one's candidacy on the right foot)," said Copas, 43.

Indeed, the election results showed that the elders' blessings were not always a ticket to victory.

Galuten, who had consulted elders since he began his political career in 1968, won his second term as mayor while Paayas lost his reelection bid.

Copas lost in his bid to be Buguias town's new mayor, a defeat he took graciously despite serving as board member for three consecutive terms.

Talking to the elders need not be formal or marked with a ritual where animals are butchered, Cosente said. He said a simple gathering with elders would be an acceptable opportunity for one to express his political ambitions.

He said he talked to elders for each of the three terms that he ran and won as mayor of Tublay town from 1988 to 1998. He later became a board member.

In the latest election, however, Cosente's luck ran out and lost his bid to become mayor anew. "Talking to elders and winning the votes are different," he said.

But the tradition will go on, said Dr. Eufronio Pungayan, an ethno linguist who teaches at the Saint Louis University in Baguio City.

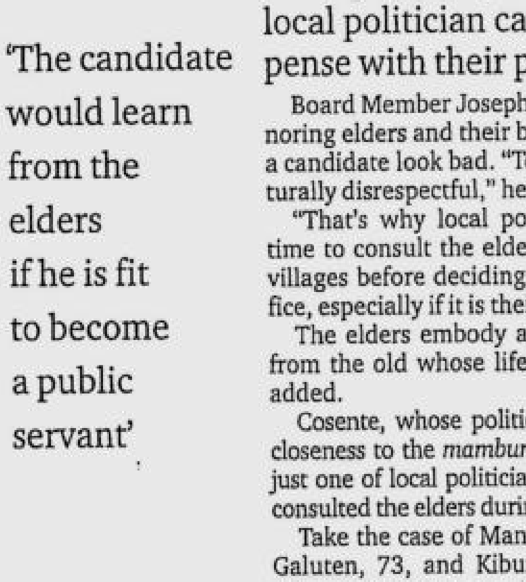
"Seeking the elders for one's political dream will remain a tradition," he said.

Modern elections speak of political machinery, capital and the so-called command votes. But in Benguet, the elders will always be there, he said.

Photographer, daughter capture colors of Cagayan North

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

AT THE SIGHT OF PHOTOGRAPHS of sparkling green rice fields and wide white-sand beaches, the viewers, mostly from Tuguegarao City, were astonished to learn that these were pieces of their vast province, Cagayan North.



PHOTOGRAPHER Donald Tapan and his daughter, Nikkorlai. ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY

It took two out-of-towners, photographer Donald Tapan and his daughter Nikkorlai (named after the Nikkor lens of Nikon camera) of Makati City, to make Cagayanos see their land in a new light.

In their exhibit "Colors of Cagayan North" at Paseo Real Mall ongoing until June 30 in the capital city, the Tapans also celebrate the dignity of ordinary folk from the fishermen of Aparri and Sanchez Mira to the indigenous peoples of Rizal, from the farmers of Amulung to the harpmaker, the shell vendor, the *calesa* driver and the dried fish seller found in other towns.

Commissioned by the provincial government to promote tourism, the photographers spent about a month spread out over a year traveling all over the province, going as far north as Calayan Island, only missing Babuyan Islands when they were deterred by strong waves.

Donald, 56, a veteran photojournalist whose works had appeared in Mod, Who, Woman Today, Women's Journal, Metro and Mabuhay magazines, said while on his way to shoot Cape Engaño on Palaui Island, he thought he was about to die as the boat rocked wildly with the current. When the boat docked, he was pleasantly surprised to find a place that reminded him of a more pristine Boracay. His feet sank in white powdery sand.

He described his dramatically lit shot of Callao Caves, taken towards sunset, "You compose your subject. You do not just click and click. Photography is all about the right time, the right moment."

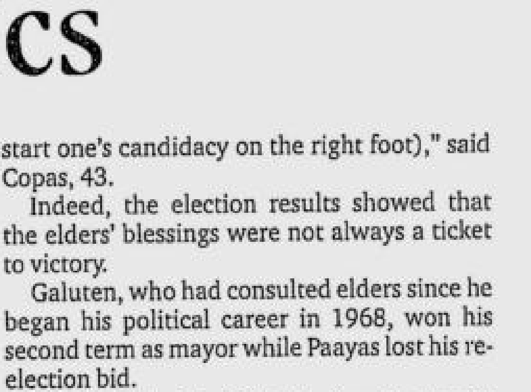
When the Tapans first visited Cagayan, their hosts made them follow a hectic itinerary. Donald said this was not workable nor would it do the province justice.

"If you want good photos, you have to stay in a place for sometime, take pictures at different times of the day. Sometimes you have to stay in a place for a week just going around and observing. You must have patience."

He prefers early morning and late afternoon light. This is why many of the 60 photos have a poetic softness cast on them.

Asked what made Cagayan distinctive from other provinces they have photographed, father and daughter agreed that it was made up of "several Boracays."

Nikkorlai, 24, a graduate of the College of St. Benilde, said the northernmost province of mainland Luzon boasted of "different shorelines—there are stony ones, those with fine white sand and those with gray sand. From Bataraw Falls in Calayan Island you walk a bit, then you're by a beach. That's rare." She even found a spot that she lovingly called "the blue lagoon."



CALVARY Hills in Iguig, Cagayan, by Donald Tapan.

What Donald warned against was for this place to become another Boracay. "It should be the locals who must invest in these sites. The local government must protect them."

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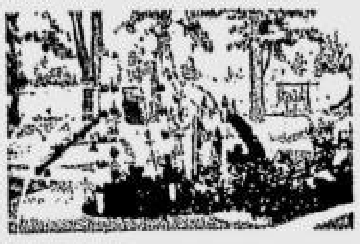

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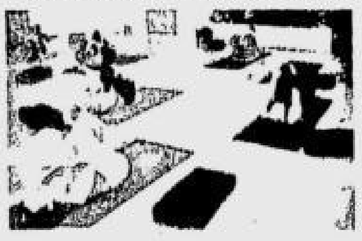

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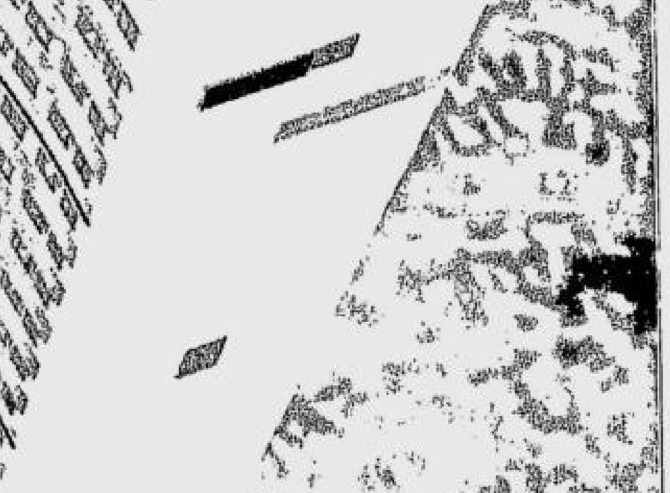
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Search for oil starts in Cebu-Bohol Strait

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE SEARCH FOR oil deposits at the Cebu-Bohol Strait started yesterday amid concerns it would destroy the environment and deprive fishermen of their catch.

The seismic survey, however, was confined to the Cebu side of the strait as the Department of Energy and its contractor had decided to delay work on the Bohol side because of resistance, not just from fishermen but also from local officials.

Antonio Labios, DOE Visayas director, said the seismic survey started in the five municipal waters of Cebu, with Argao town as focus, through the MV Pacific Sword.

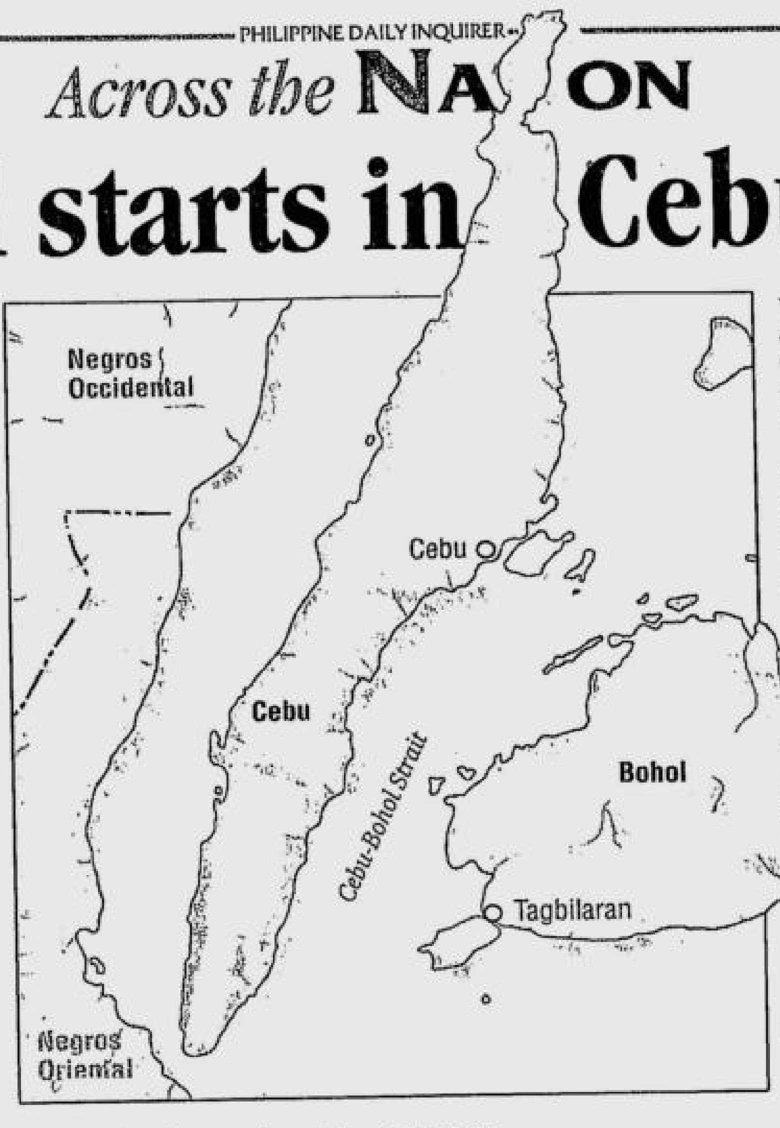
The MV Pacific Sword, with two to three supporting vessels, conducted "test shots" on Monday to determine what the DOE said was seismic path.

The supporting vessels, bearing personnel from the Coast Guard, the DOE and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), will ensure that no other vessels, or fishermen, would stray into an 8.5 km radius delineated around the seismic vessel.

> 'We felt that they had abused our rights. Their action was malicious ...'

But before the NorAsian Energy Limited and the DOE could start the seismic survey, 10 fishermen from Argao town went to the Argao police station to complain that their fish pens were destroyed on June 13.

Because of the complaints, NorAsian and DOE officials met with the fishermen at the office of Argao Mayor Wilfredo Caminero on Monday where the fishermen officially received compensation for the damaged fish pens.



THE AREA where explorers hope to find oil.

Ariel Sarajena, president of the Langtad Fishermen Association of Barangay Langtad, Argao, said the NorAsian had dismantled at least seven fish pens on June 13, contrary to what the company said in a consultation meeting.

"We felt that they had abused our rights. Their action was malicious," Sarajena said.

Aside from Sarajena, four other members of the association—Jose Lobitos, Reynaldo Puerto, Alfredo Solis, and Wilfredo Solis—also complained to the police.

Five fishermen—Raul Villamejor, Michael Fuentes, Paterno Higida, Dioscoro Sosas and Fermin Medrano—filed a similar complaint. The five belonged to another group, the Nagkahiusang Mananagat sa Taloot (Nagmata) of Barangay Taloot, Argao.

Each group claimed that men onboard a tugboat hired by NorAsian dismantled seven fish pens on June 13.

Because of the complaint, NorAsian and the DOE officials met with the fishermen at Caminero's office where they paid the fishermen P7,000 each.

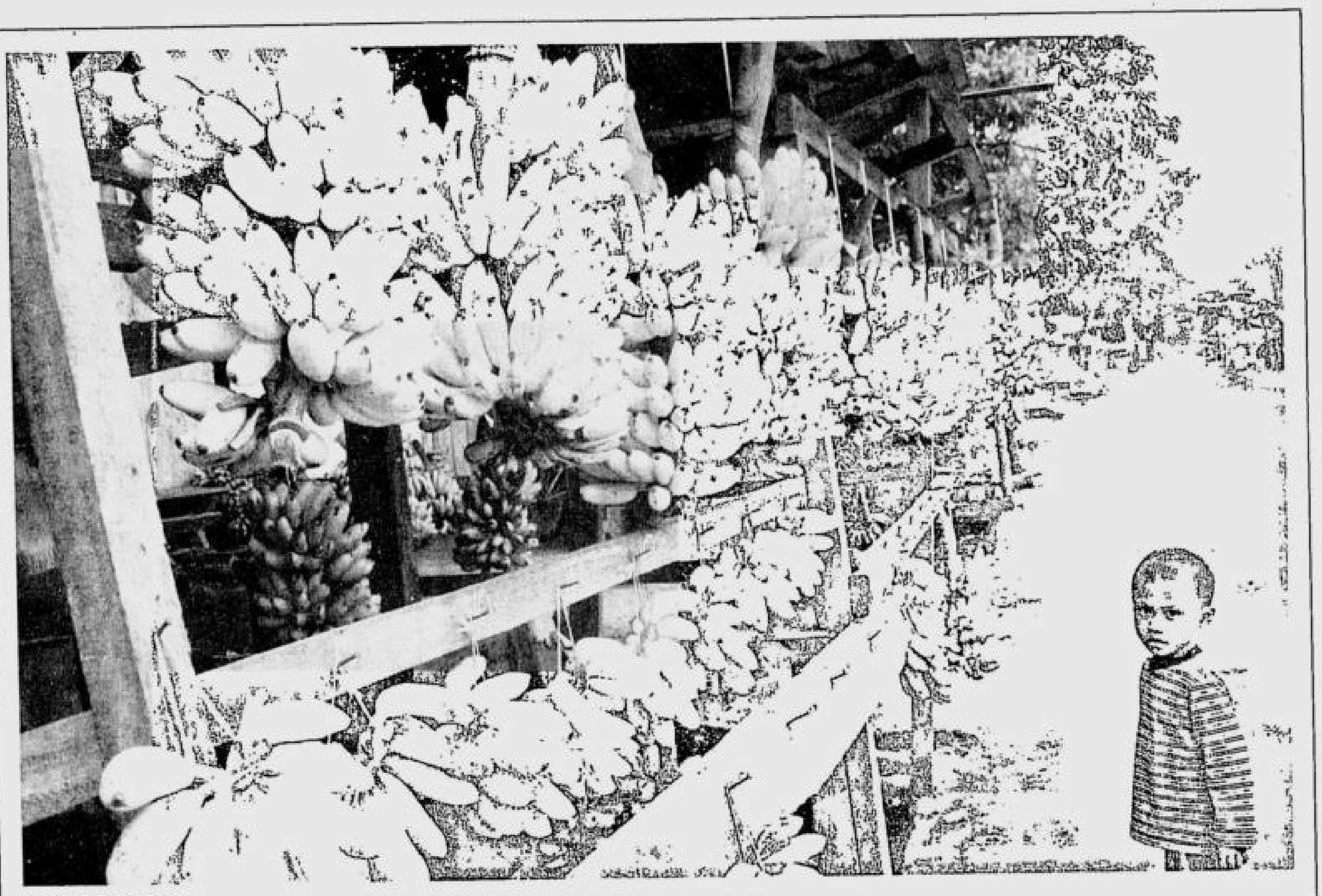
Sarajena said his group had received compensation for the seven damaged fish pens.

However, Sarajena said they would ask for additional compensation for each of the fishermen for income lost during the period of the seismic survey.

As of yesterday, they have yet to complete the computations but he said they might ask for P5,000 monthly compensation for each fisherman.

Sarajena claimed that his group has almost 200 fishermen, while Nagmata has over 100 members.

He said unregistered fishermen must also be given compensation.



GOLD FINGER
A stall on the national highway of Pantar, Lanao del Norte displays what residents of the town call "amas," or gold finger, bananas known for their sweetness.
RICHEL UMEL/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Singer Cynthia Patag leads filing of case vs illegal recruiters

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—SINGER-COMEdienne Cynthia Patag has filed a swindling case against officials of a training agency for luring jobseekers to nonexistent teaching jobs in the United States.

Patag, with the help of the regional office of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), filed the case against Norman Gibbs, owner and founder of E-World Resource Centers, and his associates, Montano Ruiz Go, Desiree Gibbs, Cheryl Pagaran and Venancio Diaz.

With her hopes to become a teacher in the US dashed, and P63,000 poorer, Patag said she wants justice for herself and many others, who shelled out huge amounts and were perhaps deep in debt, just to prepare themselves for teaching positions in the States that never came.

In January 2006, Patag attended an E-World Resource Centers orientation where Norman Gibbs introduced his company as one that trains all its enrollees, who possess a bachelor's degree, to become professional educators in the States via the "Passport to Training" program.

The prospect of working as professionals in the States has not only attracted Patag, who has a Bachelor of Arts in Literature from De La Salle University, but also many others from all over Western Visayas—teachers, government employees, professionals and jobless college graduates, among others.

Patag, paid through the Iloilo office of E-World, a total of P63,000 to undergo a "career development and professional training," registered with ABCTE, and for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) application. The last two payments were in US dollars.

Patag said that many of the applicants are poor and could hardly afford E-World's preparation program, which consists of 72 hours of computer laboratory, purchase of CD-ROM, seminars, and a purchase of the thick photocopied workbook.

The ABCTE gives out two online tests, Professional Teaching Knowledge and Subject Area Expertise. Both tests consist of multiple choice and essay. Patag said she knew no one from among E-World enrollees that passed the exams.

Patag said she did not take the ABCTE exams. She said: "Me, a US high school teacher? What was I thinking?"

Gibbs promised that his two other companies, E-World-staffing.com and E-World Staffing, would be able to send the participants to the States as teachers after six months to 12 months of training.

However, he said the teachers have to pass tests administered by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), certifying them as "highly qualified teachers."

In an interview last February at the West Visayas State University where E-World had an orientation, Gibbs said that he never promised Patag that she could land a job as a teacher in the States.

But Patag said the Bible-quoting Gibbs has repeatedly told participants that the States needed more than a million teachers due to the "No Child Left Behind Act," a federal law signed by President George W. Bush in 2001.

Under the law the states and districts can recruit teachers using two routes—Praxis (Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers), which is widely used in the States and the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), a new teacher certification for all bachelor degree holders.

Iloilo activists' kin pin hope on Trillanes

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE FAMILIES of two abducted activists in Iloilo are seeking the help of Senator-elect Antonio Trillanes IV in finding their loved ones. Luis Posa, elder brother of missing militant leader Ma. Luisa Posa-Dominado, said they welcomed the plan of Trillanes to investigate political killings and forced disappearances of activists, which are largely blamed on members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"As relatives of one of the victims, the pronouncements of Senator Trillanes gave us some hope in the more than two-month unsolved disappearance of Luisa," Luis said in a statement.

Unidentified armed men abducted Dominado and Nilo Arado in Barangay Cabanbanan in Oton town on April 12. They also shot and seriously wounded human rights activist Jose Ely Garachico after they waylaid the victims' vehicle.

Detained and tortured during martial law and during the Aquino administration, Dominado was the spokesperson in Panay of the Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at para sa Amnestiya (Selda). Arado was the spokesperson in Panay of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and nominee of the party-list group Anakpawis.

Luis said Trillanes was "more credible" than military officials who have repeatedly denied involvement in the abduction and who have promised to help solve the case.

"We have more faith in the Trillanes (future) investigations delivering results as it relies more on information from inside the military—from people who oppose and are in the know of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances that are being done (by people) within their ranks," said Luis.

Trillanes, during his proclamation last week, said he would call for a Senate inquiry into the spate of political killings and forced disappearances that had continued unabated since President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in January 2001.

He said the killings have put the entire AFP in a bad light even if those in the "regular uniformed units" did not agree with "this kind of work."

Trillanes alleged that the so-called "death squads" were usually "composite teams" run by the intelligence community, including intelligence units from each major service command.

Luis said the continued killings and abduction of activists "only further firms up our suspicion that what happened to Luisa and Nilo are continually perpetrated by the same people that Senator Trillanes wants and has the guts to probe."

Luis lamented the inability of investigators to find the missing activists.

While they said they welcome any investigation on the alleged "death squads," the Army's 3rd Infantry Division said it hopes that Trillanes' investigation "will be done impartially and objectively and not merely as concession to militant groups which reportedly campaigned for him."

"We hope his advocacy will include the soldiers and policemen who were murdered by the (New People's Army)," said 3ID spokesperson Lt. Col David Tan.

Hog raisers' group to hold convention

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HOG FARmers Inc. observes its 16th National Convention on June 28-30 at the UPLB College, Los Baños, Laguna with the theme "Continuing Education, Galing ng Pinoy Hog Farmer."

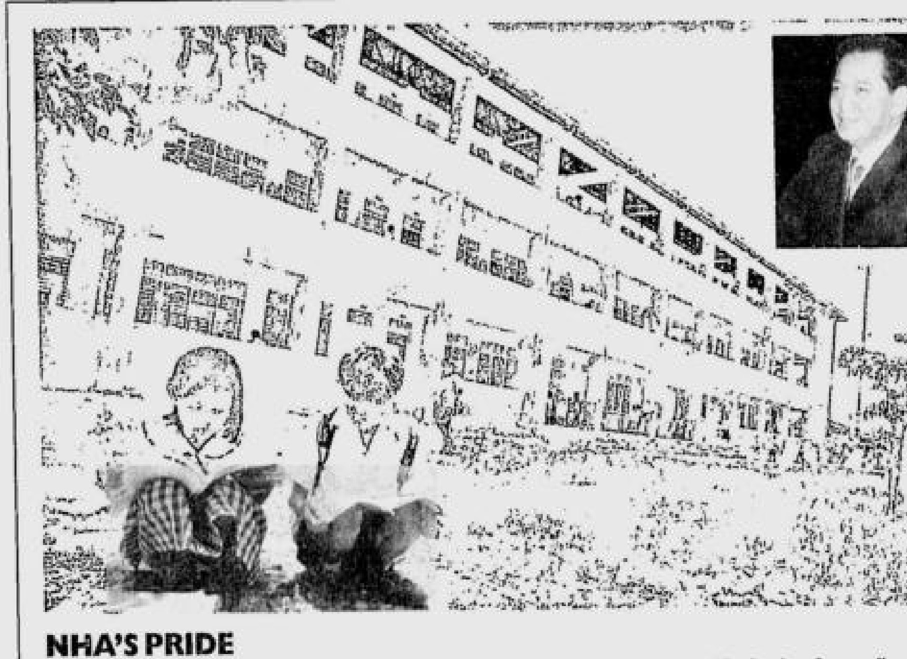
Gabriel Uy, federation national chair, said the UPLB was chosen as venue because "it's more than going back to the basics."

"It's an awareness that out there in the academe, the veterinarians, nutritionists and other animal science practitioners are always at the forefront never ceasing to learn," he said in a press statement.

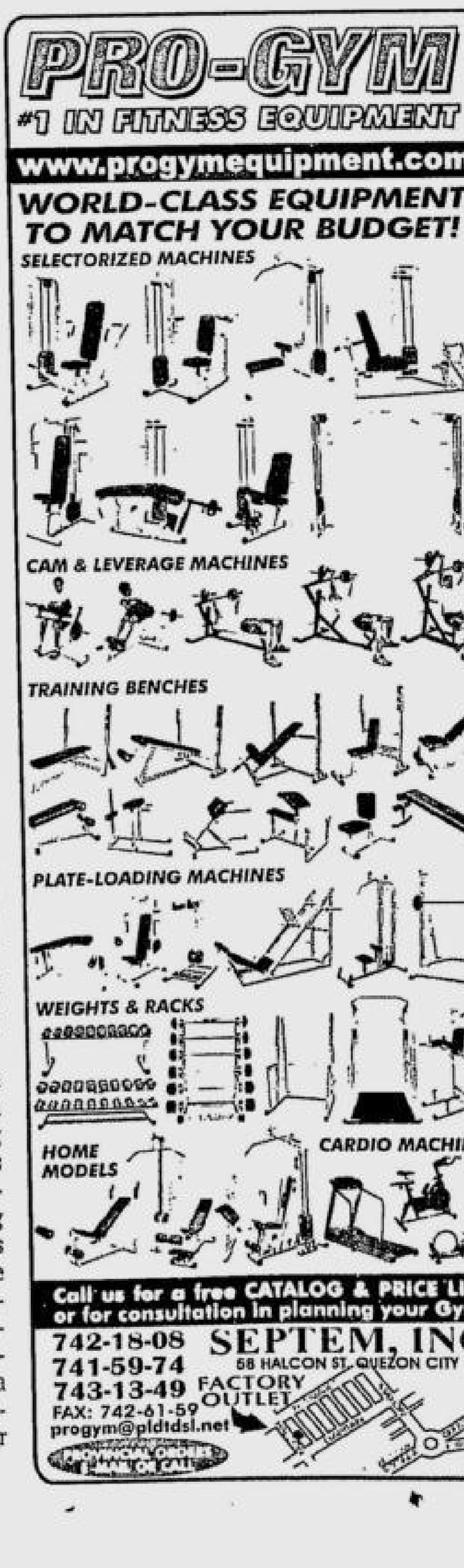
Invited to speak at the opening ceremonies was Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

Among the other guests invited were congressman-elect Leandro Mendoza Jr. and UPLB Chancellor Luis Rey Velasco.

Seminars will be conducted June 28-29 while a plenary session will be the highlight on June 29 with Senator-elect Francis "Chiz" Escudero as guest of honor and keynote speaker.



NHA'S PRIDE
The National Housing Authority, through its general manager Federico Laxa (inset), takes pride in a school in Cabuyao, Laguna that was built for children of squatters who were moved out of railways to the Southville I relocation site. This school has 4,000 pupils and was completed last Jan. 7.
PHOTO FROM NHA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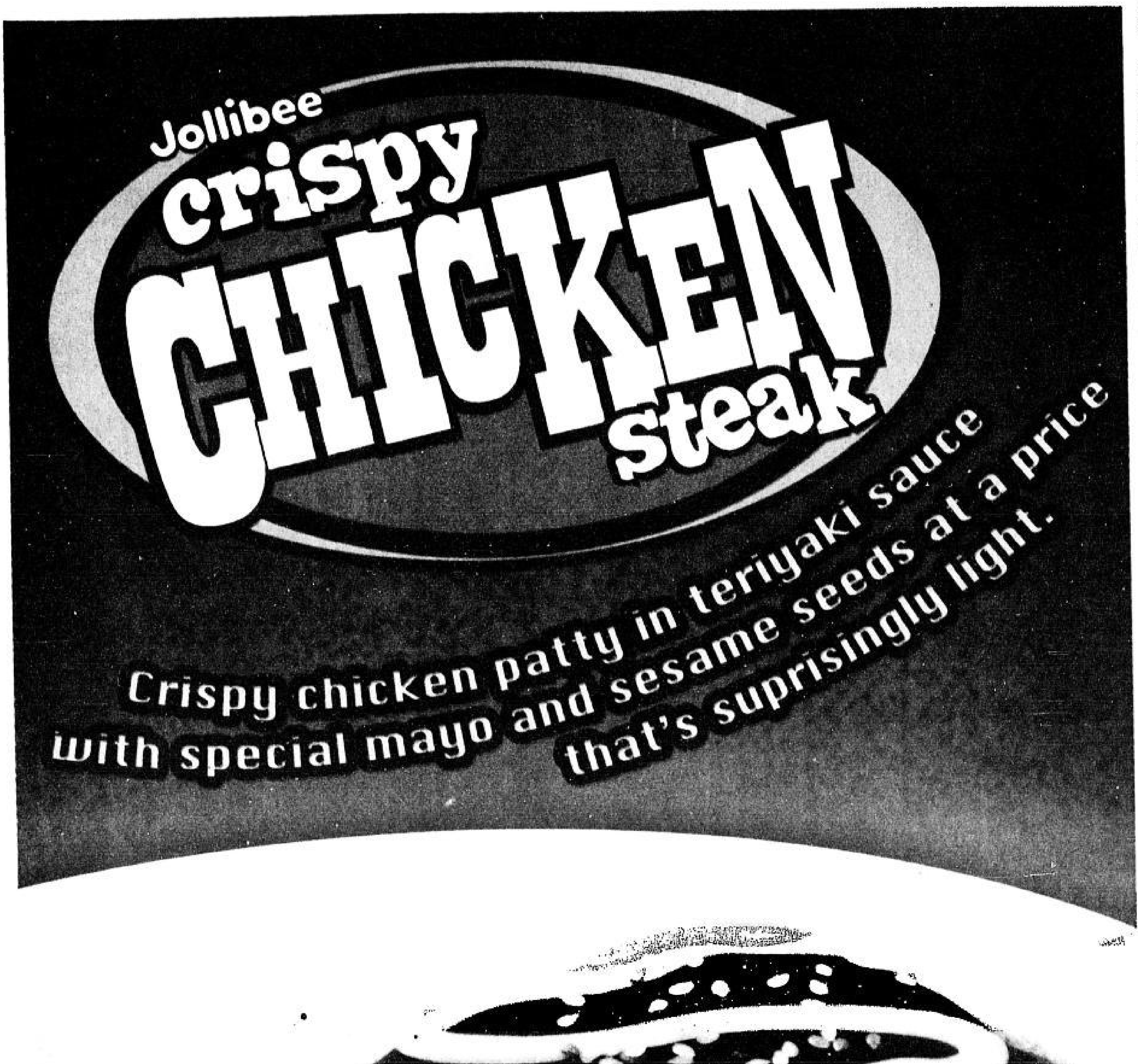
Troops close in on Bossi's abductors



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By Christine O. Avendaño and Julie S. Alipala, Nash B. Maulana and Richel Umel,
Inquirer Mindanao

MORE TROOPS WERE SENT to Lanao yesterday to cordon off an area where kidnapped Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi and his abductors were sighted last week by Muslim separatist rebels who are helping the military in the rescue operations.

Military officials were considering a military rescue of the kidnapped priest, but made it clear that for now they would continue to seek the hostage's release through negotiations and not through military force.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas sighted Bossi with his abductors last week in the thickly forested boundary of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte provinces, MILF spokesman Eid Kabalu said.

Hundreds of army soldiers, who have been searching for Bossi in nearby Zamboanga Sibugay province where he was kidnapped June 10, shifted their search to Lanao, according to Marine Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino.

MILF guerrillas have blocked possible escape routes and have tried to make contact with the abductors, although this has not yet been possible, Kabalu said.

At least two battalion of soldiers and "two brigades of MILF troops" were sent to seal the area, he said.

Seen in Lanao

Kabalu said MILF members saw Bossi with his kidnappers in the Lanao region Wednesday night.

Dolorfino said that per information shared by the MILF, the kidnappers were somewhere "on the peak of a mountain."

The MILF yesterday suggested that both government and MILF forces move in and rescue Bossi.

But the military struck down the suggestion because it would be risky for Bossi, according to Dolorfino, head of the government panel of the Adhoc Joint Action Group, a body which together with the MILF was formed to resolve criminal activities in Mindanao.

"It was not implemented because it's not advisable to do that..it will not ensure the safety of the victim. You should not resolve a kidnapping case that way. Because what if the victim dies," Dolorfino told reporters.

Dolorfino said that negotiations for Bossi's release remain to be the main objective.

"We cannot give a time frame for the recovery efforts. We really have to ensure that Father Bossi would not be harmed by the kidnappers," he said.

Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, however, was more upbeat, saying Bossi could be freed as soon as Tuesday. "Let us pray that he could be freed this afternoon," he told reporters. He gave no details.

Rescue operations

Esperon said that a whole Army battalion and a Scout Ranger company were now surrounding with the Philippine National Police the area where Bossi and his kidnappers were spotted last week.

He said the military was not ruling out rescue operations.

"If we need to use force but you must remember that in such a situation, the safety and the life of the hostage is of primary consideration," Esperon said.

Bossi, 57, was traveling by motorcycle in Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay province when armed men seized him and took him away in a boat on Sunday.

Bossi is the third Italian missionary kidnapped in Mindanao in the past decade.

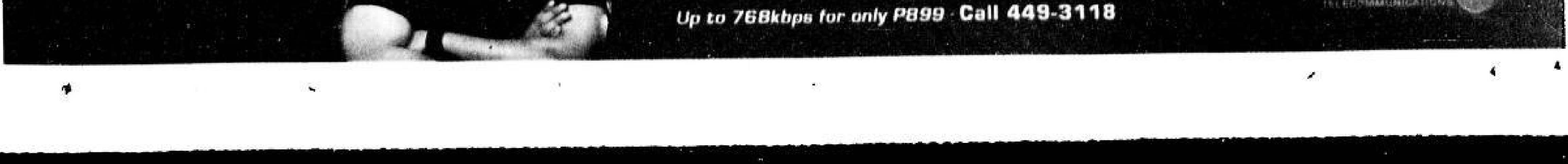
Italian Ambassador Rubens Anna Fedele, along with three other foreign missionaries, visited Payao yesterday to "get first hand information" on the kidnapping of Bossi.

Payao Mayor Joefer Mendoza told THE INQUIRER that Fedele stayed for about four hours. "He went to the actual site in Barangay Silal where Father Bossi was abducted on June 10," he said.

In Zamboanga City, an Army commander was also confident Bossi would be freed soon.

Maj. Gen. Nehemias Pajarito, commander of the Army's 1st Infantry Division based in Zamboanga del Sur, said a ranking MILF leader and an Army battalion commander have been negotiating with the kidnappers to hand over Bossi to them.

"For as long as coordination is running smoothly between the MILF and the ground soldiers, we'll get the priest within 72 hours," Pajarito told the INQUIRER by phone. *With reports from Volt Contreras, AP and AFP*



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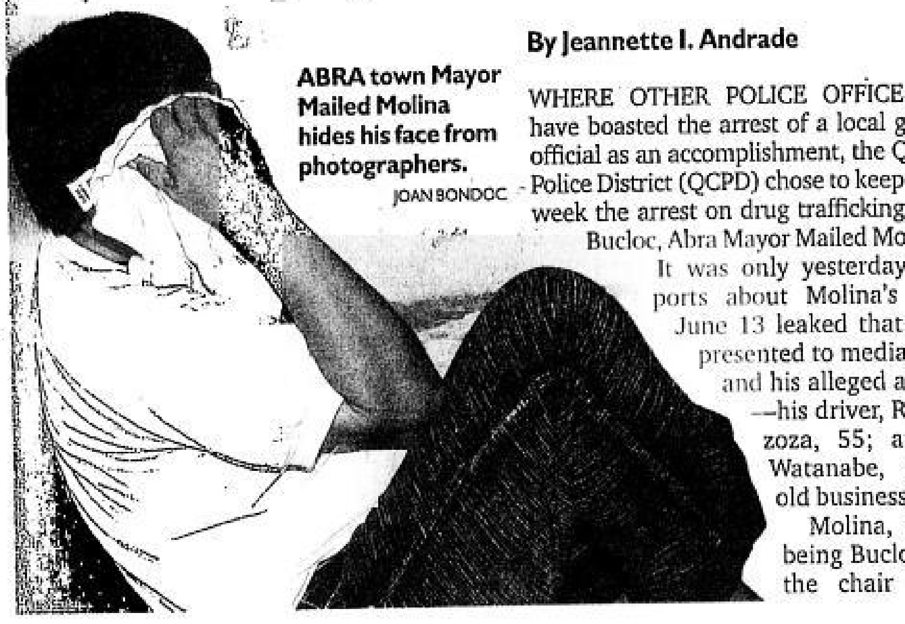
DID YOU KNOW

JOSE Rizal University in Mandaluyong City was established in 1919 as Far Eastern College on Arlegui St., Manila. It initially offered only high school and commerce diplomas, but later expanded to include other courses and an elementary school. It changed its name to Jose Rizal College in 1922. One of its alumni is former President Ramon Magsaysay, who graduated with a commerce degree.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Mayor's arrest kept secret

'Follow-up operations would have been compromised'



ABRA town Mayor Mailed Molina hides his face from photographers.
JOAN BONDOC

By Jeannette I. Andrade

WHERE OTHER POLICE OFFICES WOULD have boasted the arrest of a local government official as an accomplishment, the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) chose to keep secret for a week the arrest on drug trafficking charges of Bucloc, Abra Mayor Mailed Molina.

It was only yesterday when reports about Molina's arrest on June 13 leaked that the QCPD presented to media the mayor and his alleged accomplices—his driver, Ricardo Verzoza, 55; and Ritchie Watanabe, a 32-year-old businessman.

Molina, apart from being Bucloc mayor, is the chair and commanding general of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army who ran and lost in the Abra congressional race last month against former Abra Gov. Vicente Valera and former Lagayan, Abra Mayor Cecilia Luna.

QCPD public information office head Supt. Asprinio Cabula told the INQUIRER that they kept Molina's arrest under wraps because they did not want to jeopardize follow-up operations being conducted by joint operatives of the QCPD District Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Group and Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDU).

"Some of our operatives conducted follow-up operations in Abra to track down the source of the illegal drugs, but unfortunately returned empty-handed," Cabula said, stressing that there was never any attempt to hide the arrest from the public.

MAYOR'S/ A24

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No 'jueteng' in south Metro, says police official

By Julie M. Aurelio

A TOP POLICE OFFICIAL YESTERDAY denied reports that "jueteng" operations have resumed in certain cities in the southern part of Metro Manila.

"There are no jueteng operators based in my area of responsibility, as far as I know," Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, director of the Southern Police District, said in a phone interview.

He was reacting to news reports that the illegal numbers game has made a comeback in the cities of Taguig, Muntinlupa, Pasay, Las Piñas and Parañaque.

According to reports, jueteng operators have started once again to make payoffs to some police officials in Metro Manila and in nearby regions just to be able to resume their illegal activities.

Rosales explained that some jueteng operators from the Southern Tagalog region could be operating at the boundary of southern Metro Manila.

The SPD shares a common boundary with the provinces of Laguna and Cavite.

"My suspicion is that some operators who want to take out the small-town lottery (STL) project are conducting jueteng draws at the borders near the SPD," the police official said.

He added that earlier this year, just before the May 14 polls, his men caught some men drawing the winning jueteng numbers for the day inside a passenger jeepney in Muntinlupa City.

"If they are inside a jeepney, it's easier for them to move their activities from one place to another. *Sa boundary lang ginagawa yung bola*," Rosales told the INQUIRER.

The SPD director added that jueteng has lost some of its appeal as a form of gambling in view of the high-stakes horse races and casinos in Metro Manila.

But he said he would still look into reports about the resurgence of the illegal numbers game in his area, adding that he would soon assign a police official to handle the jueteng problem.

Following recent incidents of bank robberies in Makati City and Parañaque City, Rosales said he is focusing his energies on strengthening the anticriminality campaign.

METROBRIEFS

Media man charged

A LEGAL researcher has filed grave coercion charges against a media personality and two police officials of the Traffic Management Group (TMG) at the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office for allegedly seizing his van without the proper documents. Romulo Elma, of San Juan Bautista St. in Payatas-A, Quezon City, accused media man Ben Tulfo, Inspectors Julius Bernardo and Lakandula Santos of forcibly seizing his vehicle on May 9 in Rodriguez, Rizal. Also charged were Jose Lizardo Villapando and Paulenar Calayag, both staff members of Tulfo's TV show, "Bitag," and Christopher Villarin, of Phase 2, Block 4, Lot 42 Eastwood Greenview Subd., Rodriguez, Rizal. In his complaint-affidavit, Elma said Rosemarie Eustaquio and her son Villarin gave him the van on March 12 as payment for his help in a cause concerning a disputed lot. Tulfo, however, stressed in his TV program and newspaper column that Elma had misrepresented himself as a lawyer to Eustaquio. "Eustaquio and her son sought our help after Elma failed to keep his end of the bargain months after they gave him the van as collateral," Tulfo said in his column.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Van passengers robbed

FIVE armed men were able to cart away more than P20,000 in cash and valuables from passengers of a public utility van plying the Coastal Road at 7:30 p.m. Monday in Las Piñas City. The van, driven by German Penales, was en route to Las Piñas after picking up passengers at the Savers' Square terminal in Pasay City at when five men announced a holdup and robbed the 11 passengers of their belongings.

Julie M. Aurelio

Franchise trade show

PROGRAMS offering franchising options to overseas Filipino workers will be the highlight of the franchise trade show dubbed, "Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. (AFFI) Franchise @ 10," at the Megatrade Halls 2 and 3, SM Megamall on July 6 to 8. AFFI president Richie Cuna, president of Milkin Corp. said the trade show seeks to offer more dynamic business opportunities for OFWs and budding entrepreneurs. For more details, interested parties may call 6334547, 6334330 or 3955009.

Gag order for media covering Roldan case

By Kristine L. Alave

THE NEW JUDGE HEARING THE kidnapping case against former congressman and actor Dennis Roldan yesterday imposed a gag order on all the parties involved in the case, including the lawyers of both sides and media.

Judge Rodolfo Bonifacio, of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 159, said the proceedings of the case should be confidential because it involves a minor—the kidnap victim.

He added that he wants less publicity on the case in accordance with the Family Court Law to insulate the minor from possible trauma as a result of the trial.

According to Sec. 12 of the law, "all hearings and conciliations of the child and family cases shall be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's and family's dignity and worth, and shall respect their privacy at all stages of the proceedings. Recordings of the case shall be dealt with utmost confidentiality and the identity of parties shall not be divulged unless necessary and with authority of the judge."

Bonifacio barred reporters from taking notes during the trial and told the boy's father, Roger Yu, who took the witness stand yesterday, not to talk to media about the case.

"You can write what transcribed, but you're not supposed to report on the testimonies," Bonifacio told reporters.

While noting that he understands the public's need to be informed of developments in the case, Bonifacio also noted that there is a need to avoid trial by publicity.

Roldan, who served as a representative of Quezon City's 3rd district, is accused of masterminding the abduction of a 3-year old Chinese-Filipino boy in February 2005.

The boy was abducted on his way to nursery school and was rescued by the police almost two weeks later.

Baby, not bomb, found in bag left behind in bus

By Julie M. Aurelio

A BLUE BAG LEFT INSIDE A BUS in Pasay City gave several people a scare Monday night.

But panic soon turned to pity when they saw that it contained a baby.

The bag was discovered inside a Jam bus which just arrived from Biñan, Laguna at the bus firm's terminal at the corner of Taft Avenue and Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. in Pasay City at around 10 p.m.

After arriving at the terminal, the bus conductor checked the vehicle for any belongings left behind by passengers. He then saw a blue bag under a seat.

"We asked the maintenance crew to get the bag, but we called the Pasay City police in case it was a bomb," Catalino de Castro, a dispatcher, said.

Responding policemen from the Police Community Precinct 1 nearby opened the bag and found a baby boy inside. Beside him was a bottle of milk.

"The boy couldn't have been more than a month old. The zipper of the bag was opened slightly to let the baby breathe, De Castro said.

Police contacted a news crew from TV station GMA 7 which turned the baby over to the social welfare department.

De Castro said it was the first time they found an abandoned baby inside a bag, although incidents of baggage being left behind are common.

A few weeks ago, a paper bag was left unattended near the Taft Avenue station of the Metro Rail Transit 3 in Pasay City. The bag contained clothes.

A BOY holds a handkerchief to his face for protection as a man conducts fogging operations in a subdivision in San Mateo, Rizal. Malaria cases have gone up in the province in the first half of the year. ROMY HOMILLADA

'Clean habits more effective than fogging against dengue'

By Allison W. Lopez

CLEANLINESS, NOT FOGGING operations, drives away dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

Dr. Manuel Baranda, Manila Health Department chief said yesterday that keeping homes clean was a more practical long-term solution to prevent dengue, compared to fogging.

"Cleanliness is really the answer. Apart from being effective for only a short period, fogging is also expensive. Ridding the home of stagnant water—on the roof, in flower pots—is a surefire way to avoid dengue," he said.

Cases of dengue, a mosquito-borne disease transmitted to people bitten by infected insects, usually rise with the onset of the rainy season. The mosquitoes thrive in stagnant water.

From Jan. 1 to June 2 this year, a total of 142 confirmed cases, with two deaths, have been recorded in Manila. Dr. Ed Serrano, MHD chief for preventable diseases, however, said the rate was still 54 percent lower compared to the same same period in 2006.

The Tondo and Sta. Cruz areas in the city, he said, were considered dengue-prone areas because of the high number of cases recorded there every year.

Baranda said they conducted fogging operations in schools even before the opening of classes.

"We also have an awareness campaign conducted by barangay health officials on the 'four S' or ways to prevent dengue: self-protection by wearing pants or applying mosquito-repellent lotion; seeking early consultation; sanitation and; saying no to indiscriminate fogging which may increase the mosquitoes' resistance," Serrano added.

Dengue symptoms include the sudden onset of high-grade fever, sometimes accompanied by bleeding and rashes on the arms and legs.

Residents should also make sure that they eat food that was prepared properly and drink clean water in order to avoid other diseases during the rainy season like typhoid, gastroenteritis and cholera, said Baranda.

Makati City flood control crew starts cleanup operations

By DJ Yap

THE CITY OF MAKATI IS bracing itself for the onset of the rainy season by taking measures to prevent flooding in areas with poor drainage and to reduce the incidence of diseases like dengue brought on by the rains.

One step taken by the city's departments of engineering and public works, and environmental services is to beef up dredging operations in major creeks and waterways.

City engineer Nelson Morales, in a statement, said priority was given to low-lying barangays such as San Antonio, Pio del Pilar, La Paz, Kasilawan, Tejeros and San Isidro.

He said all concerned departments have standing orders from Mayor Jejomar Binay to reduce garbage volume and improve the flood control system to maintain cleanliness and destroy all possible breeding places of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

"Mayor Binay also instructed us to intensify our operations to prevent the occurrence of flood in our streets that may contribute to the spread of water-borne diseases, especially among children," Morales said.

He added that they have already completed flood control operations in critical or flood-prone areas in the city in the first five months of the year and are now focusing on places where there is minimal flooding.

The DEPW and DES started the dredging operations in January. Being monitored are the creeks of Amorsolo, Maricaban, Medina, PNR and Makati Diversion Channel, and Barangays Singkamas, Kasilawan and Carmona in District I, and Maya and Charlie creeks and Barangay Rizal in District II.

Officials are also monitoring the creeks in District I, including Zanzibar, Camachile, Calatagan and Bangkal, and creeks in District II, including Zyris, Paloma, Target Range, and 21st Avenue.

DEPW and DES are also conducting routine de-clogging and maintenance of the city's drainage and sewerage system, as part of their flood mitigation efforts.

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Mayor's . . .

From page A23

Cabula suggested that Molina probably got involved in the narcotics trade in an attempt to recover the money he spent in his campaign. Or the mayor could have been selling illegal drugs even before he ran for office, he added.

The police official clarified that contrary to other media reports, Molina and his companions went through inquest proceedings in the Quezon City prosecutor's office a day after their arrest for the alleged sale of two kilos of marijuana and 800 grams of hashish or ground-up marijuana leaves as well as the illegal possession of an automatic rifle, a .45 caliber pistol and assorted ammunition.

Cabula said the cases of violation of Republic Act No. 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 and illegal possession of firearms and ammunition were referred by the inquest fiscal to the Department of Justice.

"Molina's lawyers filed a motion for preliminary investigation which has been granted and was set on June 22," he added.

Based on a report from the CIDU, Molina and his two companions were arrested at around 11 p.m. on June 13 on Kalayaan Avenue in Barangay Central, Quezon City.

Before their arrest, the CIDU received information about the suspects' illegal activities, prompting operatives to set up an entrapment operation.

Molina and his companions were nabbed while selling drugs to an undercover policeman on board the mayor's silver and black Mitsubishi Strada with license plate XAK 730.

Molina, Verzoza and Watanabe remain in the custody of the CIDU.

9 supermart pilferage suspects face charges

By Tina G. Santos

NINE ALLEGED MEMBERS OF A pilferage syndicate who were caught stealing dressed chicken from a Parañaque City supermarket have been charged with qualified theft by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Charged on June 13 in the Parañaque City Prosecutor's Office were Ronald Sevellino, 24, and Reymar Reblando, 31, both merchandisers; Warren Von Geron, 23, and Rodrigo Buendia, 22, checkers at Puregold Price Club in the city.

The other suspects were Magno Dizon, 35, and Alain Baciles, 28, driver and helper of Magnum Trucking which supplies Foster Foods; and Michael Gumatay, 24, and Ronald de la Torre, 26, driver and helper at Swifts, respectively.

Meanwhile, Robert Elcano, 28, of Taguig City, was charged with violation of the anti-fencing law for buying the stolen goods.

The NBI said the men were arrested on June 12 following a complaint filed by Nelia de Jesus, representative of Puregold Price Club Inc. De Jesus told the NBI that an inventory they conducted for the first quarter of the year showed that the supermarket had incurred a P1.1 million loss due to the pilferage.

Among the brands of dressed chicken stolen were Swifts, Bounty and Foster, the NBI said.

"Out of the 500 dressed chicken for delivery, only 100 would be unloaded at the grocery. The rest were supposed to be delivered by the suspects to their contacts who buy the goods at a lower price," the NBI added.

Head agent Regner Peneza, chief of the NBI Counter Intelligence Division, said one of his agents had posed as a Puregold employee and closely monitored the suspects' moves.

The investigation also showed that the nine suspects enjoyed a lavish lifestyle.

"Sevillano, for one, spent about P7,000 to P12,000 a night in beer houses, could afford to travel to and from his hometown in Cebu by plane, and owned high-end cell phones, even if he was paid only P350 a day," the NBI added.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US launches major offensive in Iraq

US MILITARY stryker scouts from the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division help clear Diyala village, on the outskirts of Baquba, Iraq, on May 23. AFP

BAGHDAD—AROUND 10,000 US AND IRAQI troops launched a major air and ground assault on al-Qaida networks in the restive province of Diyala where thousands of people have died in insurgent attacks.

At least 22 people were killed in the biggest offensive so far in the province. Operation Arrowhead Ripper was focused in and around the capital city of Baquba, a stronghold of al-Qaida operations in Iraq.

"Task Force Lightning commenced Operation Arrowhead Ripper today in a large-scale effort to eliminate al-Qaida in Iraq terrorists operating in Baquba and its surrounding areas," the military said in a statement.

"Approximately 10,000 soldiers, with a full complement of attack helicopters, close air support, Strykers and Bradley Fighting Vehicles, are taking part in Arrowhead Ripper, which is still in its opening stages." The military said the assault was launched with a rapid night-time air assault and that by daybreak 22 militants had been killed.

"The end state is to destroy the al-Qaida influences in this province and eliminate their threat against the people," said US commander Brig. Gen. Mick Bednarek.

Troops burst into several areas surrounding the western part of Baquba—one of the main strongholds of al-Qaida—and were closing off main entrances as helicopters swirled overhead, local residents said.

Iraqi army Colonel Naguib al-Salahi said several civilians were feared killed or wounded. He did not have a precise number because "armed forces are preventing ambulances from entering the area."

Six Kurdish soldiers in the Iraqi army were also killed in the town of Hibhib, near Baquba, colleague Maj. Gen. Anwar Mohammed Amin said.

"Last night our forces in Hibhib came under heavy fire from courtyards and houses in a battle lasting from five in the evening to two in the morning, leading to the deaths of six of our soldiers and the wounding of 16 others," he said.

Another security official confirmed the attack, adding that three army vehicles were burned while on their way to Baghdad.

Authorities imposed a curfew in Baquba as intense fighting broke out, with police fanning out across the city and using loudspeakers to warn people to stay indoors. *AFP*

UN: Iraq war hikes refugee total to near 10 million

GENEVA—VIOLENCE IN IRAQ IS THE main driver behind a significant rise in the global refugee population to nearly 10 million people by the end of 2006, the UN refugee agency said on Tuesday.

"By the close of 2006, there were an estimated 9.9 million refugees globally. For the first time since 2002, a declining trend in the global figures was reversed," the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said in its "2006 Global Trends" report.

The number of refugees rose by 1.2 million or 14 percent in 2006—equal to the 1.2 million Iraqis who sought refuge in neighboring Jordan and Syria over the same period.

A further 300,000 Iraqis fled to other countries, and the total—1.5 million—represents a more than fivefold increase over the year, the UNHCR said.

Iraqis thus form the second largest contingent of refugees, behind 2.1 million refugees from Afghanistan, the UNHCR said in the report.

UNHCR figures do not include some 4.3 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories, who fall under the mandate of the separate agency, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

The UNHCR also concerns itself with other "persons of concern," such as those who are stateless, returnees and internally displaced.

Taken as a whole, there were 32.9 million such people recorded in 2006, marking a "significant increase" of 56 percent on the year before, with the single largest increase occurring among internally displaced persons.

Although the "Global Trends" report only covers the period up to the end of 2006, more recent UNHCR figures out of Iraq have shown the trend has continued unabated.

Latest data estimate that the total number of displaced people inside the country has passed the two million mark, to 2.03 million.

About 1.02 million people were known to be displaced inside Iraq before former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was toppled by US-led forces in 2003. *AFP*

North Korea plans to close nuclear reactor next month

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA PLANS TO SEAL ITS nuclear reactor, the source of weapons-grade plutonium, in the second half of July, Russia's Interfax news agency quoted an unidentified North Korean diplomatic source as saying on Monday.

Despite more than two months of delay in beginning the dismantling of the North's atom bomb program, it would still be possible to complete the nuclear disarmament of the communist state by the end of the year, the chief US nuclear envoy said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (Iaea), the UN nuclear watchdog, said on Monday a senior delegation would visit the North next week to agree on details for a return of its inspectors to monitor Pyongyang's promised nuclear shutdown.

"To stop the reactor, it will take about a month according to our specialists," the North Korean source was quoted as saying by Interfax.

"So we are counting on sealing it in the second half of July, in accordance with the agreements reached at the six-party talks," the source said. That Beijing forum brings together the two Koreas, the United States, China, Russia and Japan.

In Washington, US State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said the reactor could be mothballed simply by "hitting the off switch." "In our view, a period of weeks, not months, is probably about the right one" in closing Yongbyon, he told reporters.

The North Korean source said the Iaea delegation would be present at the first stage of stopping the reactor and again when the reactor is fully sealed "to convince them of that."

"The stopping of the reactor will mean the implementation by (North Korea) of its obligations on the start of the denuclearization of the peninsula," the source told Interfax.

The source said Pyongyang felt it would be "appropriate" for six-party talks to resume after the reactor is sealed.

US officials said they looked to resume those talks to nail down steps to complete denuclearization. This would require the North to provide a full inventory of capabilities, including its plutonium stockpile, and disable reprocessing facilities.

South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said a Yongbyon closure would give critical momentum to the six-party talks.

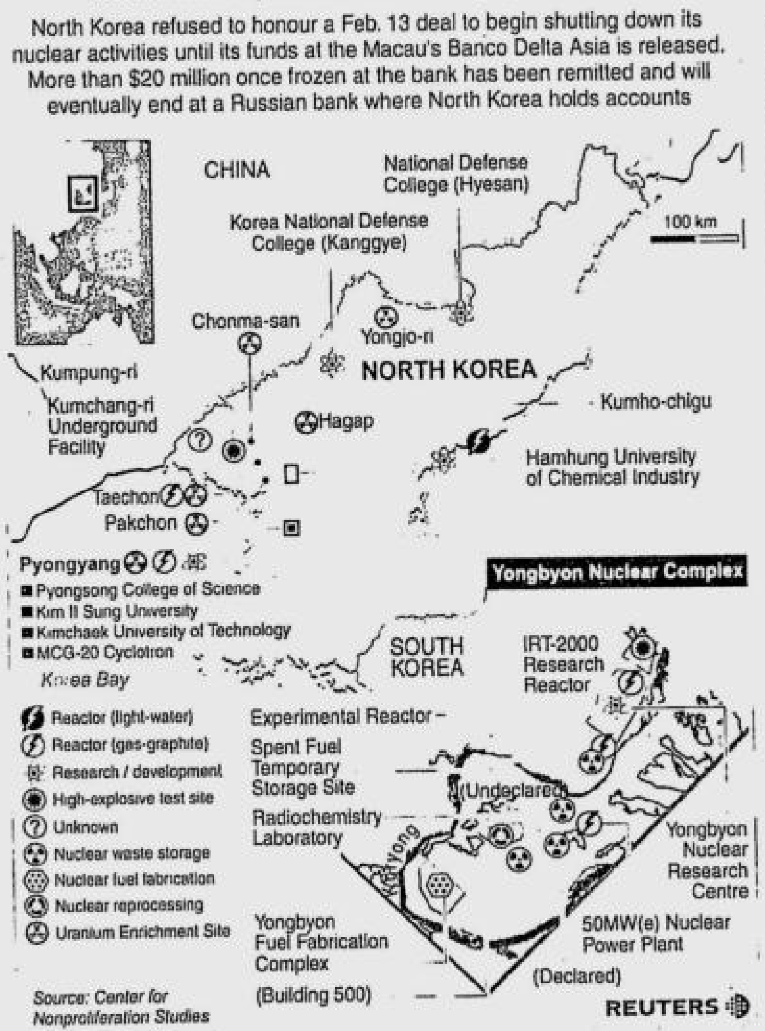
"It's a very big step in a way and they can boost the confidence (of countries in the talks)," he told reporters during a visit to Paris. "There will continue to be some snags, I think, hitches, of course, but the point is that they (the talks) have a general vision and agenda and framework."

US Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill, in Beijing for talks with South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, said he expected a complete disablement of the North's nuclear program could be accomplished by the end of the year. *Reuters*

NORTH KOREA DISARMAMENT

North Korea plans to seal its Yongbyon reactor in the second half of July, Russia's Interfax news agency quoted an unidentified North Korean diplomatic source as saying on Monday

North Korea refused to honour a Feb. 13 deal to begin shutting down its nuclear activities until its funds at the Macau's Banco Delta Asia is released. More than $20 million once frozen at the bank has been remitted and will eventually end at a Russian bank where North Korea holds accounts



Source: Center for Nonproliferation Studies

REUTERS

US, Europe resume direct aid to Palestinians

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES and Europe Monday restored direct aid to the Palestinians in a show of support after president Mahmud Abbas fired a Hamas-led government following internecine clashes.

"We will not leave 1.5 million Palestinians in the hands of terrorist organizations," US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said of the impoverished Gaza Strip, where Hamas last week seized control from forces loyal to Abbas.

The Gaza fighting, which killed more than 110 Palestinians, prompted the president to sack his Hamas prime minister and swear in a new government in the West Bank on Sunday.

Rice said the United States was lifting its 15-month embargo on direct aid to the Palestinian territories, as the European Union normalized ties with the new government and resumed its own aid flows.

EU foreign ministers, meeting in Luxembourg, also urged Israel to support the fragile government set up in defiance of Hamas, an Islamist movement that figures on a Western blacklist of outlawed "terrorist" groups.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the EU had good relations with the new Palestinian prime minister, Salam Fayyad, "so there is much in favor of seizing this opportunity and supporting this cabinet." Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday in New York that the appointment of Fayyad's moderate government in the West Bank could pave the way for talks on a permanent peace agreement between the two sides.

Olmert was due later Monday to meet Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates before summit talks here with President George W. Bush, who earlier "pledged help and support" to Abbas in a telephone call, the White House said. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Thaksin summoned

BANGKOK—Thailand's ousted and exiled prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra was ordered Tuesday to appear before police in Bangkok next week to face corruption charges. Thaksin and his wife Pojaman, who are both out of the country, will be charged with making fraudulent filings to the Securities and Exchange Commission over the 2003 listing of a property company, police said. They will also be charged with failing to inform the Stock Exchange of Thailand about later transactions involving the company, SC Asset, which was part of Thaksin's Shin Corp telecom empire, police added. Thaksin and Pojaman were both ordered to appear before police between June 26 and 29 to hear the charges, said Sunai Manomaiudom, head of the Department of Special Investigations. "If they intentionally fail to appear, we must issue an arrest warrant," Sunai told reporters. *AFP*

New hostages in Nigeria

LAGOS—Italian oil company Eni said 27 people, including 11 soldiers, were being held hostage at one of its oil field stations in Nigeria on Monday after the facility was overrun by militants a day earlier. The Ogbainbiri flow station in Bayelsa state was one of two oil plants in the Niger Delta invaded by armed men on Sunday, but youths who invaded the second facility, a flow station operated by US oil giant Chevron at Abiteye in nearby Delta state, had left on Monday. No one was killed in the invasions, but industry sources said about 80,000 barrels a day of oil production was lost, adding to about 670,000 barrels already shut because of militant attacks in Africa's top oil producer. Italian oil company Eni said it was working with local authorities to resolve the crisis. *Reuters*

Tokyo spa explosion

TOKYO—An explosion ripped through a women's-only hot spring spa in downtown Tokyo on Tuesday, killing at least one woman and injuring at least four other people, police said. A boiler in the annex to the spa's main building had exploded, sending the roof and walls of the building flying, media reports said. Live TV cameras showed workers carrying out at least one injured person and others searching the debris under and around the building—only the metal skeleton of which remained—to see if others were trapped. Media reports said at least one person was believed trapped in the basement, although a fire department spokesperson could not confirm the reports. *Reuters*

Pakistan power shortage

KARACHI—Pakistan's worst electricity shortage in memory has sent rioters onto the streets of several cities and poses a fresh headache for embattled President Pervez Musharraf, officials said. Regular power cuts lasting from two to 12 hours increased the resentment of a population amid a blistering heat wave that claimed the lives of at least 100 people in the past fortnight. An 18-year-old man in northwest Pakistan shot himself in the head with a Kalashnikov assault rifle on Saturday, in what his family said was a protest against the continual supply problems. He died instantly. Mobs angered by the blackouts hurled stones at passing cars and burned tires in the sprawling southern port city of Karachi on numerous occasions last week. Protests also erupted in Lahore and many rural areas. *AFP*

Archaeologists race to recover lost kingdom on the Nile

ON THE PERIPHERY OF HISTORY in antiquity, there was a land known as Kush. Overshadowed by Egypt, to the north, it was a place of uncharted breadth and depth far up the Nile, a mystery verging on myth. One thing the Egyptians knew and recorded—Kush had gold.

Scholars have come to learn that there was more to the culture of Kush than was previously suspected. From deciphered Egyptian documents and modern archaeological research, it is now known that for five centuries in the second millennium BC, the kingdom of Kush flourished with the political and military prowess to maintain some control over a wide territory in Africa.

Kush's governing success would seem to have been anomalous, or else conventional ideas about statehood rest too narrowly on the experiences of early civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt and China. How could a fairly complex society exist without a writing system, an extensive bureaucracy, or major urban centers, none of which Kush evidently had?

Archaeologists are now finding some answers—at least intriguing insights—emerging in advance of rising Nile waters behind a new dam in northern Sudan. Hurried excavations are uncovering ancient settlements, cemeteries, and gold-processing centers in regions previously unexplored.

In recent reports and interviews, archaeologists said they had found widespread evidence that the kingdom of Kush, in its ascendancy from 2000 BC to 1500 BC, exerted control or at least influence over a 1,207-kilometer stretch of the Nile Valley.

Some archaeologists theorize that the discoveries show that the rulers of Kush were the first in sub-Saharan Africa to hold sway over so vast a territory.

Over the last few years, archaeological teams from Britain, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sudan, and the United States have raced to dig at sites that will soon be underwater.

The teams were surprised to find hundreds of settlement ruins, cemeteries and examples of rock art that had never been studied. One of the most comprehensive salvage operations has been conducted by groups headed by Henryk Paner of the Gdansk Archaeological Museum in Poland, which surveyed 711 ancient sites in 2003 alone.

The scale of the salvage effort hardly compares to the response in the 1960s to the Aswan High Dam, which flooded a part of Nubia that then reached into what is southern Egypt. Imposing temples that the pharaohs erected at Abu Simbel and Philae were dismantled and restored on higher ground.

The Kushites, however, left no such grand architecture to be rescued. Their kingdom declined and eventually disappeared by the end of the 16th century BC, as Egypt grew more powerful and expansive under rulers of the period known as the New Kingdom. *NYT*

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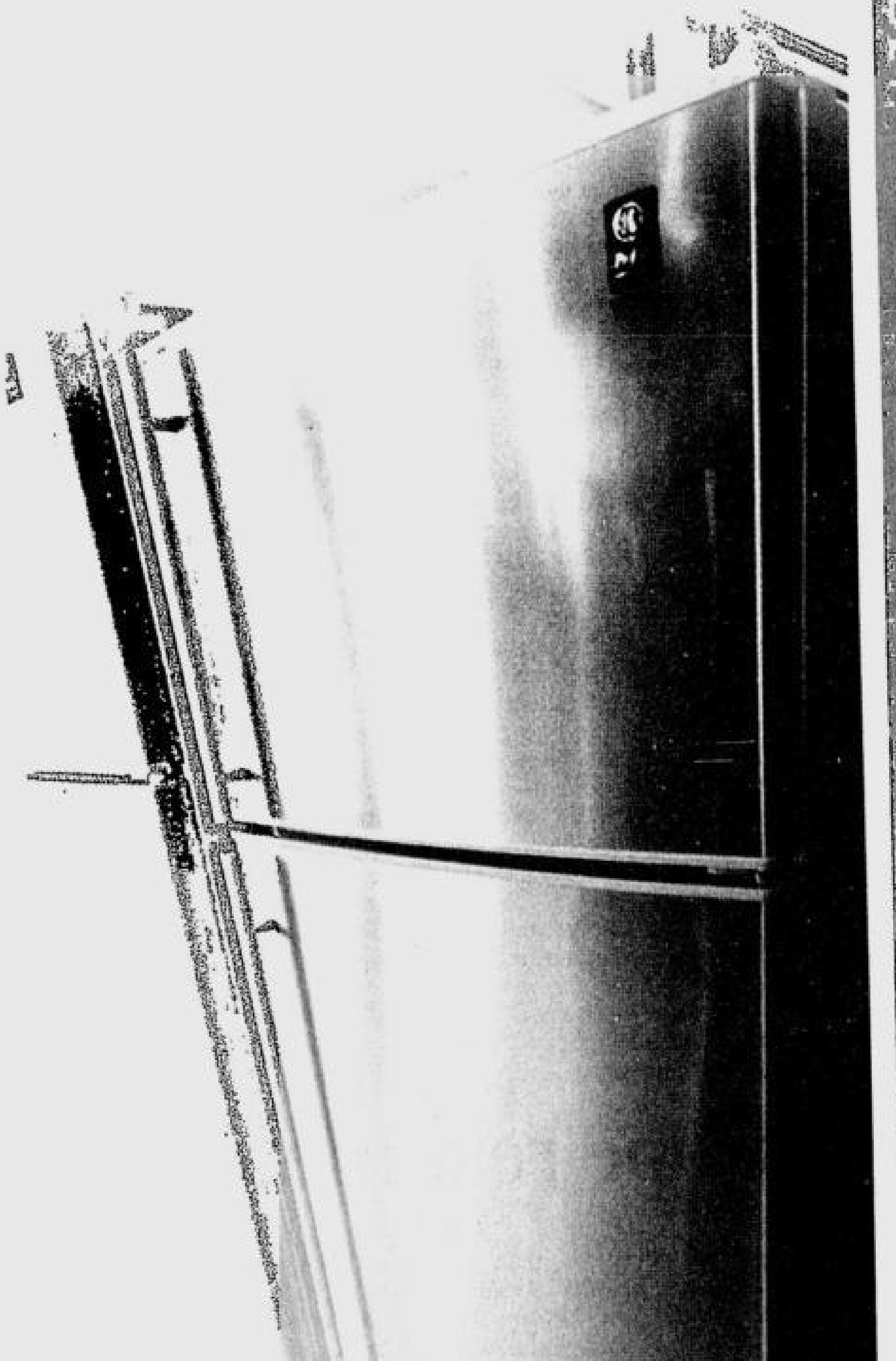

GE imagination at work

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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Lakers not keen on trading Kobe/A29

Last 4 squads gear up for battle

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN coming off a long rest and coming off a quarterfinal series that went the distance could come into play when the PBA Fiesta Cup semifinal round gets going today at the Araneta Coliseum.

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs. Talk 'N Text
7:20 p.m.—Alaska vs. San Miguel Beer

Defending champion Red Bull slugs it out with Talk 'N Text, while Alaska battles San Miguel Beer at the start of two best-of-seven series that could favor the Bulls and the Aces because of the two-week breaks they earned as a bonus for topping the elimination round.

Red Bull and Talk 'N Text take the Big Dome floor at 4:35 p.m. with the Phone Pals coming off a gruelling rubber match against Air21, while Alaska battles San Miguel Beer at 7:20 p.m.

The Beermen pulled off an improbable victory Sunday, erasing a 16-point deficit with 6:26 left in the fourth period against sister team Barangay Ginebra in their quarterfinal rubber match.

"That was a heck of a game," San Miguel Beer's Siot Tanquingcen said after the victory over the Gin Kings on Sunday. "We have to keep our intensity up going to the next round."

Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao will find out if he succeeded in keeping his Bulls sharp after topping the elimination round two weeks ago with a victory that came after dealing away cornerstone Enrico Villanueva.

"This is the first time that we've made the semifinals outright," Guiao had said. "And our problem is how to keep sharp and keep the rust away. We're in unfamiliar territory."

James Penny will again lead the Bulls, who won this tournament at the expense of Purefoods in seven pulsating games last year.

JJ Sullinger and the pesky Mac Cardona will be the main offensive weapons of the Phone Pals. Both were the keys why Talk 'N Text was able to hang on after almost blowing a 21-point fourth-quarter lead against the Express.

Alaska, which wound up as the No. 2 seed after the eliminations, will be led as usual by Rosell Ellis, a leading contender for the Best Import award despite not being a very explosive scorer.

Musong R. Castillo

Mediation gag order hints of Pacquiao deal

THE END OF THE LEGAL TUSSLE BEtween Top Rank and Golden Boy Promotions for a solid hold on the promotional rights to the fights of Manny Pacquiao is in the offing.

Thanks to the efforts of an interested party, which is using its influence and persuasive powers to convince Golden Boy's Oscar De La Hoya and Top Rank's Bob Arum to settle their difference out of the court room.

According to Boxingconfidential.com's Michael Marley, a gag order has silently been imposed on the contending parties while mediation talks are ongoing.

This was partly confirmed when the normally media-friendly Arum refused to comment on the issue Monday afternoon. He, however, hinted that everything will be settled by tonight (Wednesday morning in Manila) or tomorrow.

According to Boxingconfidential.com, the mediation process, reportedly initiated by HBO executives, is continuing as both parties look for ways to settle their legal disputes and make the most out of Pacquiao's drawing power in the ring.

Both have aces up their sleeves.

Top Rank has Pacquiao while GBP has the most attractive foes for the world's best fighter in 2006—Marco Antonio Barrera, Joan Guzman and Juan Manuel Marquez.

HBO reportedly broached the idea of a sharing agreement and, thus far, Top Rank and GBP, are said to be very receptive.

Though a Pacquiao-Humberto Soto fight has been slated for Oct. 6 in Vancouver, HBO's purported entry into the row has provided an entirely new scenario. *Roy Luarca*

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Casas, 3 others share lead with 68s

CASAS: In-form

By Musong R. Castillo

LIPA CITY—DISPLAYING THE FINEST FORM in his comeback, Cassius Casas fired a four-under-par 68 yesterday to share the lead with three others at the start of the Pantechs PGAP Invitational at the Mount Malarayat's composite course here.

The Davao native, who has struggled with his swing and has not been in contention in a major tournament in the recent past, fired a 35-33 card to tie Edwin Estrera, Mars Pucay and Asian Tour veteran Antonio Lascuña.

Lascuña, the inaugural winner of the rich The Country Club Invitational, turned in an eagle-spiked 36-32, Pucay had 33-35 and Estrera, who teamed up with amateur ace Jay Bayron to win the Konica Pro-Am earlier in the year, had 33-35.

Estrera, the burly 36-year-old, parred only two holes in the front nine after making five birdies and two bogeys for an impressive start in the event presented by PGAP president Jun Bustamante.

Obscure Ibarra Quiachon shot a 69 on the strength of a 31 in the front nine to trail the leaders by a stroke.

Erwin Sanchez also fired a 69 (34-35) like Orlan Sumcad (36-33) and journeyman Rey Pagunsan (36-33) to stay a shot ahead of a three-man group that scored 70s led by former amateur ace Artemio Murakami (36-34).Juvic Pagunsan struggled to a 71 and was five shots off.

Richard Sinfuego, who led in the first three days of the second leg of this series at the Royal Northwoods, and Richard Abaring also fired 70s.

Elmer Salvador, who won the first two legs in contrasting styles, was only good for a level 72, his aspirations of a third straight triumph resting heavily on a fine second round effort today.

Harbour focuses on RP five

By Jasmine W. Payo

JUST DAYS AFTER NAILING ITS THIRD straight PBL crown, Harbour Centre shifts its focus on the Philippine campaign in men's basketball in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games.

"We have to work on getting the best players," said Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, project manager of the all-amateur team set to see action in the Games this December in Thailand.

A "Tryout ng Bayan" will be conducted in the first week of July, Romero said during the PSA Forum yesterday at Shakey's UN Avenue.

National head coach Junel Baculi recently invited 48 crack amateurs to join the national pool led by two-time PBL Most Valuable Player Jason Castro and his Harbour Centre teammates JC Intal, Ryan Araña and Finals MVP Chico Lanete.

Romero said that Harbour Centre—which swept Cebuana Lhuillier in the recent PBL title series—is holding off plans to jump into the pro league to focus on the Philippine campaign.

"We have to work on the SEA Games first, we're expecting to finalize the lineup by August," said Romero, who graced the forum with Harbour Cente coach and national team consultant Jorge Gallent and team manager Erick Arejola.

But Romero added that Harbour Centre plans to extend its support to other sports aside from the three-time PBL champion team and the RP squad that bagged the title in the Seaba Champions Cup in Jakarta in April.

Currently, Harbour also supports the National University basketball team, the La Salle women's volleyball squad and the Manila baseball team.

"We have many national teams who desperately need help," said Romero. "I'm proposing a revival of a national sports program similar to Gintong Alay, parallel to the programs of the Philippine Sports Commission."

Gintong Alay was a successful national sports development program headed by Ilocos Norte governor-elect Mike Keon until February 1986.

Lady Archers clinch 2nd semis victory

By Romina S. Austria

LA SALLE'S DETERMINATION AND DEDICATION PAID OFF YESTERDAY AS THE DEfending champion repulsed leader San Sebastian College, 25-17, 20-25, 25-21, 24-26, 15-13, for its second straight win in the semifinal round of the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

STANDINGS	W	L
SSC	7	2
Lyceum	6	2
UST	5	3
La Salle	5	4
Ateneo	3	6

GAMES TOMORROW
(*The Arena*)
2 p.m.—Lyceum vs Ateneo
4 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs San Sebastian

In the second game, University of Santo Tomas dropped the first set before overcoming a surprisingly tough Ateneo, 20-25, 25-10, 25-23, 25-20.

The Tigresses remained in third place at 5-4 while the Lady Eagles bowed out of the finals race with their fifth straight loss and an overall 3-6 record.

Santo Tomas let go of guest player Nerissa Bautista and acquired Adamson University's Suzanne Roces, who produced 13 points behind Venus Bernal's 26 and Mary Jean Balse's 19.

Ateneo, on the other hand, took in La Salle's elimination-round guest player Amy Guanco in place of the injured Thai Kanchana Jindarat.

La Salle coach Ramil de Jesus scrawled the words "Determination, Dedication, De La Salle" on a white board inside their dugout to inspire his wards.

La Salle won a playoff game against Adamson for the fifth and last semifinal ticket.

"We really need to get as many wins as possible because we started from the bottom," said De Jesus.

The Lady Archers' fifth win in nine games came with a price as guest Thai player Areerat Sanorseang aggravated a right ankle sprain.

Sanorseang, who led La Salle's charge with 25 points, sustained the injury on Sunday during their game over Lyceum but did not inform the coaching staff. Yesterday, she went out of the game after a block in the fifth set.

The Lady Stags, who beat the Lady Archers during their elimination meeting last May 29, 25-17, 25-12, 25-16, retained the lead at 7-2 despite breaking their six-game winning run.

La Salle jumped to a 10-5 lead in the final set but San Sebastian closed in, 10-11, behind Jinni Mondejar and guest Thai player Jaroenri Bualee.

LA SALLE'S Thai guest player Sanorseang Areerat (12) sets up play for the Lady Archers as Manilla Santos (14) moves in for a spike. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Hotshot Fil-American 1st to sign up for PBA draft

THE LIST FOR THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASsociation rookie draft already has one name on it.

Ryan Reyes, a Filipino born and raised in the United States, made his intention of turning pro formal by being the first to sign up for the draft scheduled on Aug. 19 at the Market! Market! in Taguig.

The 6-foot-2 Reyes, a former high school teammate of NBA three-point champ Jason Kapono of the Miami Heat, will end his tour of duty with Henkel Sista, the Philippine Basketball League club which he helped to a third-place finish in the recent Unity Cup.

Monument to a Firefly

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

CHANCES ARE YOU NEVER MET HIM.

He would drop by their place in Pasig, said his mother, and would be gone the next moment.

He was like a doctor, she added, who would go the moment he was through with his assigned chore.

The bereaved mother described his son as a flitting presence.

He was, on the whole, now only a blur.

But he was more akin to a firefly because, based on what we had gathered, he never failed to lend brightness to places he visited.

* * *

Did you have the chance to see, hear or meet Benjie Angeles?

Help me find him, the mother pleaded.

Benjie, barely 50, passed away some three months ago.

That was the last time I heard of him, or so I thought, until I got a call from the forlorn mother one morning.

She honestly thought I knew more about his son than she did.

Sorry, I told her, but I met Benjie only once.

* * *

The chance meeting took place two years ago in scenic Tagbilaran, Bohol, during the annual meeting of the Governors League of the Philippines.

He was with a team from the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Benjie was stocky, built like a worker.

He treated me warmly as though we had known each other long.

Of course, his charming peasant's face was familiar and we must've indeed met previously in a media place, maybe at the government television station where I did boxing commentaries.

* * *

So who was this Benjie Angeles who next started sending text messages?

These were not the silly sort of messages, mind you, all were significant and helpful.

Do I know of poor farmers who would like to avail of a goat-breeding program, to which they could also provide a ready market?

Please find time to pick up these *lacatan* banana seedlings and give what you can't use to your neighbors.

Am out here with corn planters, trying to get help for them as their crops are all gravely threatened after the last big storm.

Please help me find help for these people who are now homeless and could die of hunger after the landslide.

* * *

Anyway, in his last text message, Benjie asked for my prayers.

He said he had been scheduled for an operation.

He died of multi-organ failure.

When I reported about his untimely death, I described Benjie as an agricultural activist.

I also called him an unsung hero, although he would, at times, loom to me like a Don Quijote reaching for the stars, waging a war against impossible odds.

Oh, how he wanted to see the Philippines develop its own dairy industry and stop dependence on milk from greedy foreign firms.

Benjie would go hard against corrupt practices in the current regime of President Arroyo.

He also started to campaign for Genuine Opposition senatorial candidates, led by Ping Lacson.

* * *

Of the text messages from Benjie, there was this one I was able to preserve.

He sent it way ahead of the last elections. Here: "Received many messages from GenSan. *Dati fans sila ni Pacquiao, ngayon sinusuka na siya.* He has become a swell-head, *lumaki ang ulo.* GenSan people feel insulted. *Walang tinapos*, he's unschooled, *gustong mag*-mayor."

As Benjie wanted to say, Pacquiao needed not look far for an adversary.

Benjie would not tarry to say that, in the last polls, Pacquiao shaped up to be his own biggest enemy.

Benjie was right but, well, all that's too late now.

As for the bereaved mother, she no longer has to be reassured about Benjie's heroic existence.

But she had this last request: "Please call me at 636-7083, I am putting together a memorabilia for my son Benjie to pass on to his children. Thank you very much. Momy del Angeles."

Maybe she'd call the book Monument to a Firefly.

SPORTSWATCH

FBL 3-on-3 Ballers' Battle slated in Davao

A HUNDRED TEAMS OR SO ARE EXPECTED TO VIE IN THE FIRST FUTURES Basketball League (FBL) 3-on-3 Ballers' Battle set June 30 and July 1 at the Ateneo de Davao in Davao City. Open to school and non-school-based boys' teams, the tournament has drawn teams from Holy Cross, Holy Child, Davao Christian High, Davao Wisdom Academy, Pag-asa UCCP, University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao Central Colleges and Ateneo de Davao. Registration deadline is June 27. Presented by Primovit Multivitamins and supported by Gatorade, the tournament stakes cash prizes for the top two teams aside from medals and trophies and other giveaways for the teams, according to local organizer Vic Sai, who will be assisted by FBL's Tyrone Limon. Titles in three age classes—11 to 13 years old, 14-16, and 17-19—will be disputed.

SJC International Derby finals today

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE SAN JUAN COLISEUM TODAY WHEN THE REscheduled championship round of the SJC International 8-Cock Derby finally gets going at 3 p.m. The 90-fight program is sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Three entries with four wins each led the field after the elimination and semifinal rounds held on June 11 and 13, respectively. They are Clyde and Yce of World Slasher Cup first-leg champion Charlie Hao, Jade Resort of Arman Santos and Amoy of Louie Cua and Bobby Yulo.

Pasay 5-cocker gets under way Friday

AN EXPLOSIVE GATHERING OF COCKFIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS HAPPENS AT the Pasay City Cockpit when the "JOF Sa Pasay" 5-cock derby unfolds this Friday. The event, backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, will be hosted by the father-and-son tandem of Jet and Joel Fernando of Pampanga. A trophy imported from Italy will be awarded to the champion. Heading the derby cast are Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Elwin Javelosa, Arnold Mendoza, Paul Dominguez, Jack Yap, Jun Jingco, Madlambayan brothers, Sonny Lagon, Patrick Antonio, Ruel Ricafort and Raymond Velayo. Meanwhile, the venue's Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan sizzles at 1 p.m. today with more than 50 matches lined up.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Thereshope (1), Sweet na Sweet (6), Mighty Mite (5), Indinicoltime (3)

Race 2—(Dynamic Duo (1), EJ Forever (4), Arrivederci (7), Strong Boy (2)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Courage Heart (3), Nico's In-charge (1), Order of Merit (5), Sandok (7)

Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Special Edition (2), El Terrible (4), Angie Gray (1), Man Power (7)

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Madelline (1), Astimegoesby (7), God Is Good (5), Summit Force (2)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Guardian (3), Jigsaw Star (5), Bundok Peninsula (8), BMI Baby (7), Quick Play (6)

Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Sexy Eyes (7), Siglakas (3), Loveable Dolly (6), Urban Legend (1)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Manila Magic (2), La Signorina (3), Playmaker (12), Eskapo (4), Run Like D'Wind (9), La Perouse (5)

Pascua backstops RP push in Asean age-group chess

PATTAYA, THAILAND—HARIDAS Pascua continued the charge of the country's young woodpushers, notching his seventh straight victory, a 39-move Sicilian Pelican triumph over Indonesia's Urbanis Menako Gokok, in the 8th Asean Age Group Chess Championship at the Jomtien Hotel.

Pascua was the only player unscathed in the nine-round Swiss System tournament and led second placer Nguyen Van Hai of Vietnam (5.5) in the Under-14 division. He needs just one more win or two draws in his final two matches to clinch yet another gold

"It's just a matter of making sure I won't make any mistake," said Pascua, who also won a gold medal in the blitz side of the tournament to anchor the RP charge in the event, where the Filipinos bagged three gold medals and four silvers.

Seven of 27 RP entries led by Pascua are comfortably placed in the top five of their respective classes. Brena Mae Membrere and Marie Antoinette San Diego also lead their groups.

Membrere outwitted Vietnam's Nguyen Ngoc Thuy Trang to wrest the lead in her group with 5.5 points

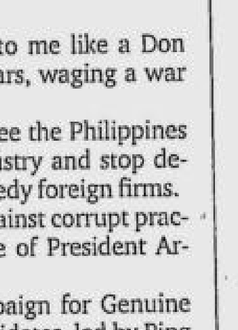
Peña joins Zhuhai AF3 Pacific races roster

DADO PEÑA, THE LAST FILIPINO TO SCORE A victory in the tough Asian Formula Three series, returns to competitive driving when he competes in the final three rounds of the AF3 Pacific Series this weekend in Zhuhai, China.

The 19-year-old Peña, winner of the final leg at the Batangas Racing Circuit last year, missed most of the F3 Pacific season as he concentrated on his studies at the University of San Francisco.

In his only other appearance on the track this year, Peña displayed deft driving on the fast Albert Park in Melbourne last March against a field of experienced drivers in the F3 support races to the Formula One Australian Grand Prix.

Peña is confident of quickly finding his rhythm when he tests with his new team a few days before the first race on Saturday.



PEÑA

Racing for JA Motorsport, Peña intends to steal the show from series leaders Dillon Battistini of England, Finland's Henri Karjalainen, Indonesian hotshot Moreno Soeprapto and the rest of the regular campaigners.

Rounds 11 to 13 of the Pacific Series, which opened in Zhuhai before making stops in Melbourne, Australia and Sentul, Indonesia, are set June 23 and 24.

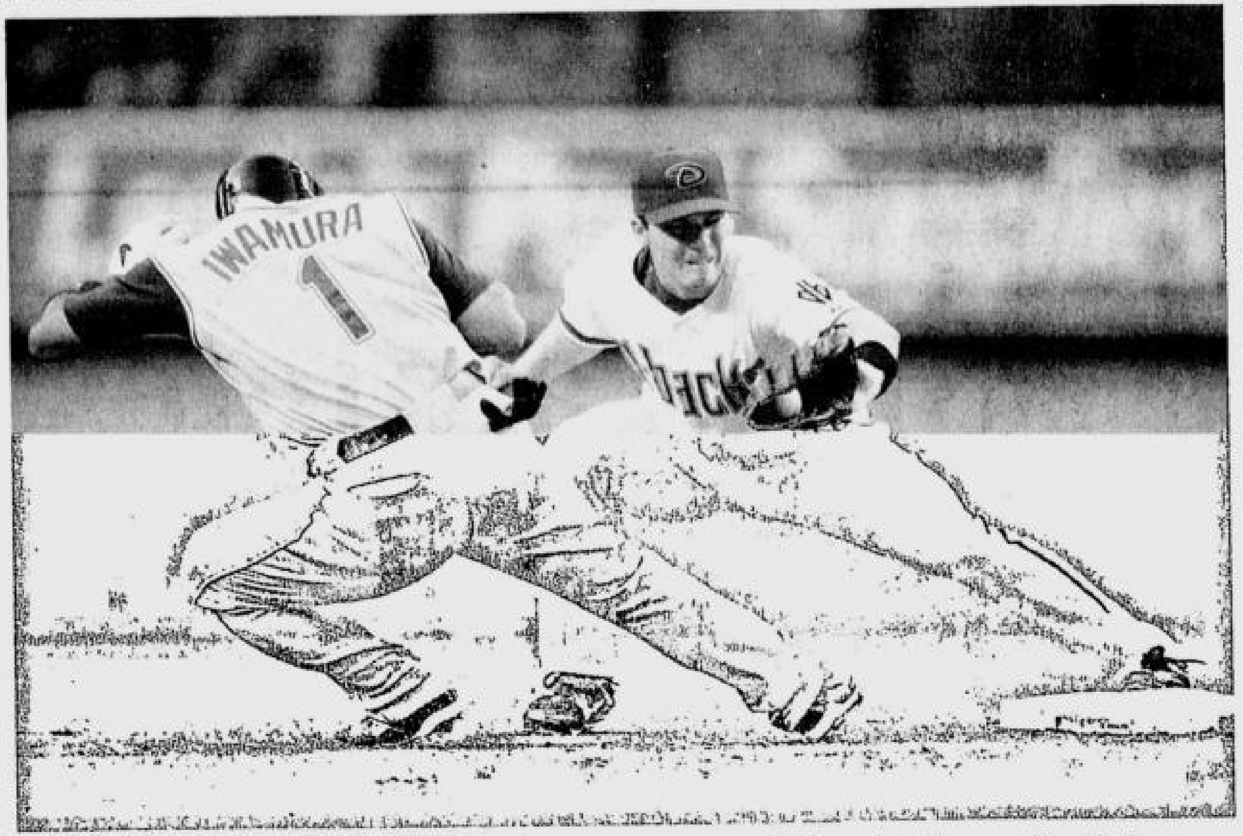
"I will be testing prior to the race and that should give me enough time to feel comfortable again in the car and be able to push for race wins," said Peña, who turns 20 next month.

The 4.3-kilometer Zhuhai International Circuit provided a venue for one of Peña's victories last season and all eyes are on the Filipino star anew.

"I believe we have the package to fight at the front and hopefully take some wins," said Peña.

Karjalainen dominated the event's previous visit to Zhuhai last January while Battistini and Soeprapto stayed within striking distance.

Battistini will drive for Aran Racing in the final races in his bid to secure the winner's prize—a fully funded drive in this year's Macau F3 Grand Prix.



IN THE NICK OF TIME: The Tampa Bay Devil Rays' Akinori Iwamura (left) gets back to second base before Arizona Diamondbacks shortstop Stephen Drew can apply the tag on a pickoff attempt in the first inning. The Devil Rays whipped the Diamondbacks, 10-2. AP

Lakers not keen on trading Kobe

LOS ANGELES—WHILE THERE SEEMS LITTLE doubt Kobe Bryant wants out of Los Angeles, the Lakers don't appear ready to make a move.

"I think we've made our position clear on that publicly and we have nothing further to say on the matter at this time," team spokesman John Black said on Monday.

Black referred to a statement issued by the NBA team owner Jerry Buss on May 30, which said in part: "We will continue to pursue every avenue possible to improve our team with (Bryant) as the cornerstone."

Buss issued the statement after speaking with Bryant. The day before, Bryant first said he wanted to be traded during a radio interview, but seemed to backtrack on another interview after speaking with Lakers coach Phil Jackson.

Buss and Bryant met last Friday in Barcelona, and while the Los Angeles Times and Riverside Press-Enterprise quoted sources as saying Bryant still wanted out, Black declined comment other than to say: "Our position is what was said at that meeting between the two of them and will remain between the two of them."

Buss, owner of the Lakers since 1979, recently sent a letter to season ticket-holders regarding the team's desire to be successful.

"We received about 1,000 e-mails expressing concerns, opinions and frustrations," Black said.

BRYANT AP

"Dr. Buss wanted to address the matter himself."

Buss said, among other things, that the Lakers had made the playoffs in 26 of his 28 years as owner, but added: "We all want more."

"Our goal has been, and remains to be, to build the Lakers into a team that can regularly compete for championships," he said. "I believe that we have always shown a willingness to do what needs to be done and spend what needs to be spent to deliver you championship caliber basketball. We remain committed to that philosophy."

Bryant's name was not mentioned in the letter.

Meanwhile, the entry Bryant reposted on Sunday on his Web site from late last month regarding his desire to be traded had been taken down by Monday.

Bryant, who turns 29 in August, is owed $88.6 million for the four years he has left on the seven-year, $136.4 million contract he signed in July 2004. A nine-time All-Star, he enters next season as the two-time defending NBA scoring champion. *AP*

Tiger cub: It's a girl for Woods

NEW YORK—LESS THAN 24 HOURS after Tiger Woods finished second at the US Open on Father's Day, his wife gave birth to a daughter. He announced late Monday on his Web site that Sam Alexis Woods was born early Monday morning.

"Both Elin and Sam are doing well and resting peacefully," Woods wrote. "We want to thank our doctors and the hospital staff for all their dedicated and hard work. This is truly a special time in our lives and we look forward to introducing Sam to our family and friends over the next few weeks. We thank everyone for their well wishes and continued respect of our privacy."

Woods said he would miss a major if it meant seeing the birth of his child. Now he won't have to, but it's not clear how his upcoming schedule will be affected.

Woods finished a shot behind Angel Cabrera on Sunday to finish second in a major for the second time this year.

He's scheduled to host a tournament in Washington, DC from July 5-8. The British Open starts on July 19, and the US PGA Championship begins on Aug. 9 at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa.

"I'm pacing myself already just because of the fact that I have a baby coming up," Woods said about two weeks ago. "I don't know how much I'm going to play after that or how much I'm going to play before that."

The past two years have been life-changing for Woods, who has won 12 majors in his brilliant career.

His father, Earl, died at age 74 in May 2006 after a long bout with cancer. A month later, Woods failed to make the cut at the US Open at Winged Foot. He came back to win the British Open in July and broke down in tears on the 18th green at Royal Liverpool, sobbing on the shoulder of his caddie.

In December, Woods went public with his wife's pregnancy. Last week, before the US Open he talked about becoming a father.

"My practice sessions are going to have to be tailored around a little bit, have to move things around," he said. *AP*

TIGER Woods (left) with wife, Elin. AFP

Abdon boosts Asean bid

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD JOHN KIER ABDON SIZzled with an eagle-aided six-under 66 but that wasn't enough to stop a two-pronged Singaporean charge yesterday in the 6th Asean schools jungolf championships at the Manila Southwoods in Cavite.

Abdon, a senior high school at San Beda, turned in the day's best performance spiked by an eagle in the par-5 14th hole to occupy the top spot in the boys individual competition.

"It was my best round in a tournament," said hefty, 5-foot-9 Abdon, who is also gearing up for his 6th stint in the World jungolf championships in San Diego next month.

Bucking a bogey in the par-3 third, Abdon pulled off two birdies in the front nine. But things got even better on the way to the club house when he birdied holes 10, 11 and 13 before the eagle at 14.

After a 230-yard second shot, Abdon found himself just 10 feet away from the pin for the eagle.

However, the next highest scorer Joey Huerva IV, could only come up with a 75.

With just the top four scorers to count, the Philippines are at 5th place in the four-day event, 18 shots behind the leading team at 304.

The RP girls team dished out a better showing at third place, relying on Irina Paulin Gabasa's 74 that enabled her to hang on at fifth place in the individual standings, two shots off the leader.

Singapore leaned heavily on Woo Ke-Jun Jonathan who fired a 69, while teammates Eugene Sim Min Hwee (71), Johnson Poh Swee Kiat (72) and Chia Chong Zheng (74) came up strong to solidify their bid with a 286 total.

Nicholas Fung Chee Yung had a 68 to power Malaysia at third place four shots off the team leader, while defending champion Thailand was just four strokes behind at 294. Brunei is at sixth place with 314 opening round.

Stephanie Loi Shu-Ning kept the Singapore girls team on top while herself holding pace in individual play after a 72. The Singapore girls team totalled 219 to lead Thailand (226) and Philippines (230).

Veterans rule Alabang race

VETERANS HIROSHI TAKEI AND FIONA Ottiger topped the Independence Day Triathlon recently in Narra Park at Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City.

The 34-year old Takei negotiated the 950m swim-27K bike-6K run event in one hour, 30 minutes and 47.21 seconds to dominate the male category.

Banking on a strong showing in the run event, the 40-year old Ottiger topped the female category in 1:52:47.47.

A total number of 178 racers competed in the event—the biggest number of participants since the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) and the Ayala Alabang Village Association (AAVA) started hosting the endurance sport in 2002.

"We are very happy with the record number of participants, but what was more encouraging was the participation of young kids which is a strong indication that triathlon is slowly but surely widening its base in the grassroots," said Trap president Tom Carrasco Jr.

Teener Andrew Gatmaitan came in seven minutes behind Takei at 1:37:04 to claim the second spot in the male category, while Senator Pia Cayetano finished runner-up at 1:55:49 in the female division.

Other winners in the sprint triathlon age-group were Christopher Quiogue and Emilaine Balatibat (19-under), Omar Paredes and Marichu Rojas (20-29); Patrick Joson and Gepiga Ilay (30-39); Wilfred Uytengsu and Rolainie Pardorla (40-49); Alfredo Santos (50-59); Ed Lucero (60-over) and Joson and Senator Pia Cayetano (Residents).

In the SuperKids event, the top finishers include Jasmine and Adrian Have (8-under); Hamish Seddon and Therese Santos (9-10).

Estrellado sibs rule Milo bowling

BROTHERS ANDREO EDUARdo and Andreo Lorenzo Estrellado topped their respective age groups in the recent Milo-SM Bowling Tournament at the SM Megamall Bowling Center.

Eduardo logged a total of 166 pins to win the boy's 7-9 division over Czar Kyle Firmiza, who finished with 145. Older brother Andreo Lorenzo seized the boy's 13-15 age category with a three-game series total of 321, highlighted by a single game high of 125.

Joining them in the winners' podium were Erwin Yaptangco, who won the 10-12 competition, and Ronill Obordo who dominated the 16-19 play.

Emerging champions in the girls' division were Romylene Garcia, who captured the 7-9 title with 249 pins; Myden Garcia, who won the 10-12 trophy with a series total of 355; and Jamila Cruz who took the 13-15 crown with 247.

EDUARDO Estrellado: 166 pins.

Taekwondo poomse course set

THE SPORT OF TAEKWONDO GETS A BIG LIFT here when the Philippine Taekwondo Association hosts the Smart Korea Kukkiwon poomse certification course on June 22-24 at the Rizal Memorial coliseum.

"In hosting this course, PTA gives our instructors the opportunity to upgrade our standard and keep pace with the rapid developments in taekwondo," says organizing committee chair Sung Chon Hong.

Around 300 PTA instructors from Metro Manila and other regions will attend the course which aims to update them on the newest tactics and methods employed in the sport all over the world.

Poomse or form is an essential part of taekwondo. It involves the enhancement of balance, coordination, timing, speed and power.

Three Korean lecturers from the world taekwondo headquarters will conduct the course. They are Song Bong Sup, vice president of Kukkiwon Taekwondo Academy; Lee Chong Kwan, director of education department of the same academy; and Hwang In Sik, chair of the education committee.

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Candice Alabanza-Iyog, Vice President for Marketing and Product, Cebu Pacific Air & YMMA awardee for Service Marketing

Jane Basas, Senior Marketing Manager, Smart Communications & YMMA awardee for International Marketing

6
LAUNCHING MARKETING INITIATIVES: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
Dondi Gomez, Category Director, Unilever & YMMA awardee for Marketing Management

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721 HOPEFULS

SEAG athletes' pool balloons

By June Navarro

SEVENTEEN MORE SLOTS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE GROWING LIST OF CANDIDATE-athletes for the Thailand Southeast Asian Games in December.

Mark Joseph, spokesperson of the SEAG task force composed of officials from the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission, said yesterday six bodybuilders and 11 rugby players were added to the candidate-athletes' pool for the Games.

The latest additions raised the total figure to 721, representing 40 of the 45 disciplines in the 11-nation meet to be held on Dec. 6-16 in the cities of Nakhon Ratchasima, Bangkok and Pattaya in Chonburi.

"This is just the number of candidates submitted by the National Sports Associations," said Joseph. "The candidates are required to participate in the national team training camp supervised by the POC and the PSC."

The Olympic body will have the final say on the composition of the delegation, Joseph said.

The task force will submit the breakdown of athletes for each of the 40 sports to the SEAG Federation Council on or before July 8. The task force will then have until the end of October to fill up the slots and present the names of the athletes.

Athletes in team sports are expected to comprise the bulk of the delegation. Football is fielding 68 athletes, traditional boat race 31, softball 34, basketball 30, baseball 22, volleyball 33 and water polo 13.

In individual sports, athletics, which has 44 events, has 48 slots to fill, karatedo has 35, sepak takraw 27, swimming and diving 25, fencing 24, archery 23, gymnastics 22, cycling 19, equestrian 18, boxing 16 and taekwondo 13.

The candidates will be required to stay in designated training camps for dietary monitoring, nutritional supplementation and physical fitness assessment—a process that Team Philippines had not done in the past.

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RUNNERS, part of about 20,500 entries, answer the starting gun in last year's Cebu City race. The Milo Marathon resumes this Sunday.

Milo Marathon carries on in GenSan Sunday

FESTIVE SPORTING ACTIVITIES ARE IN STORE IN GEN. SANTOS CITY on Sunday when it hosts the resumption of the 31st National Milo Marathon.

Every Sunday thereafter, runners in all ages will fill plazas and provincial capitol compounds for the city-hopping series.

Many in the 3-kilometer and 5K races will be there for the fun and pleasure of running, but for entries in the 21K elimination run, it will be a battle to represent their region in the National Finals slated Nov. 18 in Metro Manila.

Wilson Maningkil and Mona Liza Ambasa are expected to defend their titles in the race that dangles P159,000 in cash prizes and trophies.

The GenSan edition, which has lured 5,000 entries, will be graced by Nestle assistant vice president and Milo AVP for sports Pat Goc Ong, according to national organizer Rudy Biscocho.

The Milo marathon, being held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel Manila, Adidas and the Department of Tourism, is supported by the Philippine National Police, Local Government Units and their Public Safety Office, DepEd, Philippine National Red Cross and civic groups.

This year's national series kicked off in Batangas City on Feb. 4.

Other schedules: Zamboanga (July 1), Davao (July 8), Metro Manila (July 22), Tagbilaran (July 29), Tacloban (Aug. 5), Cebu (Aug. 12), Dumaguete (Aug. 19), Roxas, Capiz (Aug. 26), Iloilo (Sept. 2), Naga (Sept. 9), Legaspi (Sept. 16), San Pablo (Sept. 23), Cagayan de Oro (Sept. 30), Iligan (Oct. 7), Butuan (Oct. 14), Laoag (Oct. 21), Tuguegarao (Oct. 28), Baguio (Nov. 4).

OVERCOMING BALDNESS

THINK-A-HEAD

No man likes being bald. He may try to ignore it, but deep inside, there's a nagging feeling that life has been unfair. Why me? Why have I gone bald when my friends haven't? Many men sadly accept looking older, being called "Baldie," feeling not so attractive to the opposite sex and putting up with the other handicaps baldness brings – both socially and career wise.

Other men refuse to accept baldness and look for a way out – this is when a wrong decision can lead to an even worse state of frustration and despair. Before you do anything about baldness, read the answers to these most asked questions.

Q. I DON'T LIKE BEING BALD – WHAT CAN I DO?

A. There are basically two ways to go. Some men opt for a surgical hair transplant. Others for the non-surgical alternative. When making the decision there's one essential rule: *THINK-A-HEAD!* - it's not only the immediate results that are so important, it's what your head is going to look like in a few years.

Q. OK, SO WHAT ABOUT SURGICAL TRANSPLANTS?

A. Some say transplants have come a long way since the early days, others say they haven't come far enough. Basically, the surgical process involves taking donor hair from elsewhere on the recipient's head and transplanting it to the balding areas.

Q. DOES TRANSPLANTED HAIR CONTINUE TO GROW?

A. If the surgery has been performed well, the transplanted hair will continue to grow, as it did before it was moved.

Q. CAN ANY BALD MAN HAVE A TRANSPLANT?

A. It's not really possible for a man with advanced baldness because he simply would not have sufficient donor hair to cover his large bald area. Transplants do not increase the number of hairs on a man's head, it's just a case of redistributing them. Transplants are excellent for filling in smaller areas or adding extra hair to thinning parts where there is not expected to be further hairloss.

Q. ARE THERE ANY PROBLEMS WITH TRANSPLANTS?

A. For men whose baldness will not advance further, there seems little downside to having a transplant.

Q. BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF I CONTINUE TO GO BALD?

A. For those whose hairloss continues to advance, there can be significant problems. While the transplanted hair will carry on growing, his other hair becomes thin in contrast as he progressively goes bald. He can have further transplants, but it's likely donor hair will become insufficient as the donor areas do not re-grow hair. The result might be patches of thicker-growing hair among thinning and sparser hair – and this won't take long to happen. The ensuing odd appearance of the man's head can cause him further embarrassment and stress. Speed of hairloss varies, but for most it takes just a few short years from thinning to full-blown baldness.

If a man suffers from Male Pattern Baldness, which usually strikes when he's in his early twenties or thirties, his hairloss will likely continue until he's bald. This is where the catch-phrase *THINK-A-HEAD!* comes into play. Think what your head will look like in a few years after surgical transplanting – will you want to go out in public?

Q. I DON'T WANT THAT RISK, SO WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

A. The non-surgical alternative is TCR or Transdermal Cosmetic Reconstruction. It's a super-fine synthetic skin with hair seen to be actually growing from it, which is then bonded to your scalp.

Q. IS TCR FOR ANYONE, NO MATTER HOW BALD HE MIGHT BE?

A. Yes, this advanced system is ideal for any state of hairloss and baldness, even for those with only a small amount of hair at the back and sides – the sort of baldness which is really not suitable for a transplant.

Q. HOW REAL IS TCR, WILL IT LOOK GENUINE?

A. TCR is real, natural hair, which looks and feels as if it's growing from your scalp. TCR cannot be distinguished from your own hair, even by touching. You are not "wearing" it, it's part of you.

Q. DOES TCR REQUIRE SPECIAL CARE?

A. To keep TCR perfect, you need only visits to the stylist every two or three weeks, just as any man does for the cutting and styling of his hair. As you get older, your TCR can be subtly aged and grayed, just as your full head of hair would have looked had you not lost any.

Q. IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE – WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

A. There are no problems. You can do anything with TCR, it's your new full head of hair. It feels totally natural on your head – you're not aware of it. The only times you'll be reminded that you're no longer bald is when you look in the mirror and how others react to you – remember, you're going to look years younger!

Q. IS TCR AVAILABLE IN MANILA?

A. Yes, it's available in Manila at Svenson, the hair replacement specialists.

Q. IS TCR SUITABLE FOR ME?

A. To find out if your scalp condition and skin type are suitable for the TCR procedure, book a no-cost TCR fact-finding consultation by calling 892-4247.

ADVT

P1-M poker final qualifying slated

CASINO FILIPINO ANGELES WILL HOLD ITS final qualifying tournament for the third PPT Million-Peso Hold'Em Championship on Sunday.

Winners of the tournament will earn seats in the grand finals slated July 7-8. Each finals seat is worth P33,000 in fees.

Philippine Poker Tour chair and CEO Reynaldo Gamboa said "free roll" tournaments are being held at The Player's Den on A. Mabini Street, Malate. Tournament fees are waived, and the winners get berths in the satellite meet.

Gamboa also said that the grand champion will have the option to choose between the P1 million top prize or an all-expense paid vacation to Los Angeles, where he gets a chance to represent the Philippines in the "Legends of Poker" tournament at the Bike Casino in Los Angeles.

For details, log on to www.PhilippinePokerTour.com or call 812-0153 or 0917-833-6648.

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Gov't posts 5-month budget gap of ₱41.8B

Pushes sale of assets to meet targets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT has directed its main revenue-generating agencies to intensify efforts to resolve shortfalls in tax collection as it admitted that the budget gap of P41.8 billion from January to May put it off track to meet the deficit-reduction goal for 2007.

The Department of Finance yesterday reported that the budget deficit for the first five months of the year resulted from P474.4 billion worth of expenditures against P432.6 billion in revenue collection.

In May alone, the deficit amounted to P1.7 billion, a drastic turnaround from the P5.8-billion surplus recorded in the same month last year.

"As of May, were were running below our programmed deficit. It is not going to be easy meeting the first-half target. We realized that we need to continue working hard on improving

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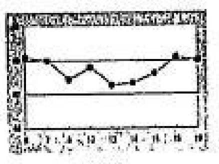

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CURRENCIES

June 19, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.745601	1.000000	45.9860
Japan	Yen	0.006030	0.008087	0.3719
United Kingdom	Pound	1.478676	1.983200	91.1994
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095381	0.127925	5.8828
Switzerland	Franc	0.600226	0.805023	37.0198
Canada	Dollar	0.695459	0.932749	42.8934
Singapore	Dollar	0.484262	0.649519	29.8688
Australia	Dollar	0.628086	0.842389	38.7381
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.977879	2.652731	121.9885
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198827	0.266667	12.2629
Brunei	Dollar	0.482715	0.647417	29.7721
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000112	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.023084	0.030960	1.4237
UAE	Dirham	0.203011	0.272279	12.5210
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.341200	61.6764
Korea	Won	0.000803	0.001077	0.0495
China	Yuan**	0.097703	0.131039	6.0260
Argentina	Peso	0.242487	0.325224	14.9558
Brazil	Real	0.391391	0.524934	24.1396
Denmark	Kroner	0.134386	0.180239	8.2885
India	Rupee	0.018410	0.024691	1.1354
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218012	0.292398	13.4462
Mexico	New Peso	0.069188	0.092795	4.2673
New Zealand	Dollar	0.561827	0.753523	34.6515
South Africa	Rand	0.105381	0.141337	6.4995
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022478	0.030148	1.3864

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—June 18, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of June 18, 2007

Eastern Petroleum starts growing ethanol feedstock

By Abigail L. Ho

EASTERN PETROLEUM CORP. HAS STARTED contracting farmers in various parts of Mindanao to grow cassava on an initial 7,000 hectares, which would eventually serve as feedstock for a planned $350-million series of ethanol projects in the next five years.

In an interview yesterday, Eastern Petroleum chair Fernando Martinez said the initial 7,000 hectares of cassava plantations could produce about 175,000 metric tons (MT) of raw cassava tubers, which could then multiply by 300 percent every year to reach 500,000 hectares by the fifth year.

The 500,000 hectares of feedstock would be enough to produce up to 2 million MT of ethanol, enough to cover the total domestic requirement of 400,000 MT with more than enough surplus for export, he said.

He said the 7,000 hectares of cassava plantations would pave the way for the implementation of the oil firm's $350-million joint venture with China's Guangxi State Farm Bureau.

The partnership entails the development of four to five ethanol plants over the next two to five years.

The first batch of farmers are in General Santos City and Saranggani, he said. Field validations were also being conducted in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental.

Offers have also been made by landowners and farmer groups in parts of Laguna, Batangas, Pampanga, Zambales and Cagayan Valley.

Under its agreement with the land consolidators and farmer groups, they, together with Eastern Petroleum, would jointly shoulder the P150 million required for farm preparation and other necessary inputs.

Eastern Petroleum, in turn, assures the purchase of the cassava that will be harvested from the identified land parcels after about 10 months.

Meanwhile, Martinez said Eastern Petroleum was in talks with another Chinese group for the possibility of setting up "mini-refineries" that could produce a million barrels of fuel a month.

"if the viability is there, the set-up time for a mini-refinery is just one-and-a-half years. It will be good to have the actual fuel source here instead of importing all of our finished products. It will be cost-effective to refine everything here," he said.

Shares close lower on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.36 percent lower yesterday as investors took profits after a three-day rally that took the market to record highs, dealers said.

The downturn on Wall Street overnight also helped bring down the market, they said.

The composite index fell 13.41 points to 3,667.14 after trading between 3,663.86 and 3,683.70. The all-share index rose 1.17 points to 2,331.34.

Gainers led losers 77 to 58, with 41 stocks unchanged.

Volume amounted to 3.68 billion shares worth P6.52 billion.

"It's a normal correction after the market hit new highs. Technically, most of the stocks are at overbought levels," said Ron Rodrigo of Unicapital Securities.

"And as in the past three days, the market took its cue from Wall Street which retreated overnight after a three-day advance," he said. *AFP*

Gov't posts 5-month …

From page B1

revenues," Teves said yesterday during a briefing on the government's fiscal performance as of end-May.

The government has set a target of limiting the deficit to P31.3 billion in the first half. This means it has to post a budget surplus of P10.5 billion in June to meet the target for the first six months.

For the full-year, the government set the deficit ceiling at P63 billion, or slightly lower than last year's actual deficit of P64.8 billion.

Of the total revenues collected in the first five months, P285.6 billion were accounted for by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and P105.3 billion were duties and taxes collected by the Bureau of Customs.

The BIR's five-month performance meant it still had to generate P87.7 billion in taxes in June to meet its first-half goal of collecting P373.3 billion.

The BOC still needed to collect P30.3 billion in June to meet its six-month target of P105.3 billion.

The Bureau of the Treasury, which collects dividends from state-owned firms and generate additional income from investments in foreign currency-denominated instruments, contributed P25.3 billion of the total revenues as of May. It was tasked to collect P29.6 billion for the first half.

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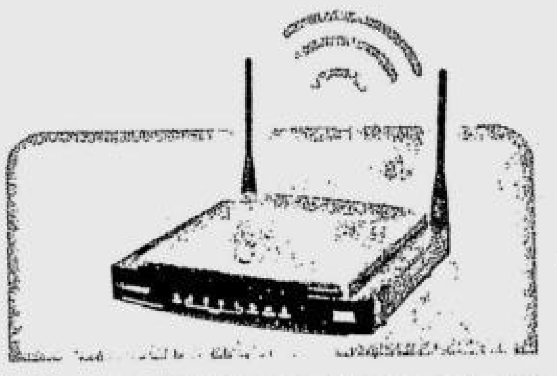

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Cebu Pacific eyes Clark hub

By Riza T. Olchondra

LOOKING BEYOND MANILA AND Cebu, Cebu Pacific is working to establish a third hub in Clark for flights to Hong Kong, Singapore, Macau, Bangkok and Taipei.

However, the budget airline's chief expressed concern on whether regulators in these destinations would give the domestic carrier the same access which the Philippines accords foreign airlines currently based in Clark.

Cebu Pacific said on Tuesday that it was seeking government approvals to use Clark as its base for daily flights to Hong Kong, four times weekly to Singapore and Macau, and three times weekly to Bangkok and Taipei.

President and CEO Lance Y. Gokongwei waxed optimistic, but was not entirely sure that Cebu Pacific can get approvals to fly to these destinations.

"If we get the necessary approvals from all the governments concerned, we will make Clark our third base and hub after Manila and Cebu," Gokongwei said in a statement.

Hong Kong (home of Hong Kong Airlines) and Singapore (home of Tiger Airways) are of particular concern because Cebu Pacific would be directly competing with their respective airlines.

Nevertheless, Clark International Airport Corp.'s president and CEO Victor Jose I. Luciano welcomed Cebu Pacific's plan.

"Clark addresses a much-needed demand and this is shown in the exponential growth of passenger traffic and cargo volume in the relatively short time that it has been in operation as an international airport. With Cebu Pacific there, we expect to grow faster," Luciano said.

Cebu Pacific's plan, Gokongwei said, is also strategically important to the JG Summit group of companies. This is because having Clark as a base of aircraft and a hub for flights to and from various regional destinations gives Cebu Pacific a major presence in Central Luzon, one of the country's fastest growing regions, and in the whole of Northern Luzon.

Gokongwei said he expects to carry about 300,000 passengers in and out of Clark per year initially, but is confident of increasing this volume as Clark continues to spark growth in the region, being the gateway to the northern corridor.

Gokongwei added that as CEB takes delivery of more Airbus aircraft, Clark will see CEB introducing more local and regional flights to make travel to and from the North more convenient.

Thrift banks' home loans up

By Michelle V. Remo

THE RISING DEMAND FOR HOMES HAS LED to the double-digit growth in real estate loans extended by thrift banks in the first quarter, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The BSP yesterday reported that real estate loans by thrift banks reached P78.03 billion in the first quarter, up 26 percent from P62.2 billion in the same period last year.

"Real estate loans were concentrated in financing the acquisition of residential property of individual homeowners or borrowers," the BSP said in a statement.

Monetary officials earlier attributed the increasing demand for residential units to the surge in remittances sent by overseas Filipino workers to their families.

They said the growth in income by OFWs had encouraged their families in the Philippines to buy a house.

The drop in interest rates to historic lows in the first quarter also helped boost demand for real estate loans.

The BSP said the share of real estate loans to the thrift bank's total outstanding loans settled at 32.83 percent, slightly higher than the 32.49 percent recorded in the first quarter of last year.

The increase in purchases by households, not only for real properties but also for other consumer goods, was credited for helping boost the economy to its strongest performance in 17 years.

The economy, as measured by its gross domestic product, grew by 6.9 percent in the first quarter from a year ago, the highest growth posted since 2000.

Economic managers said the rise in personal consumption and government spending led to the robust growth.

Meanwhile, investments by thrift banks in commercial papers and equity shares issued by real estate firms amounted to P453 million in the first quarter.

This brings the thrift banks' total exposure to the real estate sector to P78.485 billion in the first quarter.

Aboitiz Power IPO may net at least ₱12B

By Daxim L. Lucas

ELECTRICITY PRODUCER ABOITIZ POWER Corp. may raise as much as P12.5 billion from its share sale next month, according to the firm's underwriter, making it the largest initial public offering (IPO) since December 2006.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange, UBS AG said that Aboitiz Power would sell up to 2 billion of its shares anywhere from P5.25 to P6.25 apiece.

At the lower end of the range, the firm would still be able to raise P10.5 billion.

The final price is expected to be announced on July 2, 2007 at the conclusion of an international roadshow to drum up market support for the issue.

Approximately 70 percent of the shares would be offered to foreign investors.

Aboitiz Power is a 100-percent owned subsidiary of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Corp.

Proceeds of the IPO will be used to expand its current generating capacity by participating in the ongoing privatization of the National Power Corp. and in undertaking greenfield, or new, power projects.

Earlier, AEV senior vice president Juan Antonio Bernad said the Aboitiz Group planned to pursue greenfield projects such as the 30-megawatt (MW) hydroelecric power project in Tamugan, Davao; the 200-MW Cebu coal plant project and the 300-MW Subic coal plant; the 100-MW Davao coal plant.

The Aboitiz Group is also interested in acquiring other assets, such as the government's 600-MW coal-fired Masinloc coal plant in Zambales, the combined 175-MW Ambuklao and Binga hydroelectric plants in Benguet and the 193-MW Palimpinon geothermal field in Negros Island.

DA tightens inspection of plant imports

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTHUR C. YAP has ordered a full inspection of all plant imports—whether fruits or vegetables—to protect the local onion industry from smuggling.

In a statement, Yap said he had also directed plant quarantine officials to work double time and closely monitor stock inventories and prevailing prices in the domestic market.

Earlier this month, some 9,500 bags of yellow and red Onions from China were confiscated by the Department of Agriculture and Bureau of Customs after receiving a tip that these shipments had no import application registered at the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Yap said this lot was part of the more than 15,500 bags of smuggled onions confiscated by authorities in various parts of the country.

"In response to the appeal of onion growers, not a single Plant Quarantine Clearance on the importation of onions has been issued by the BPI," Yap said.

There seems to be a surplus in onion production since onion production averages at 180,000 metric tons a year.

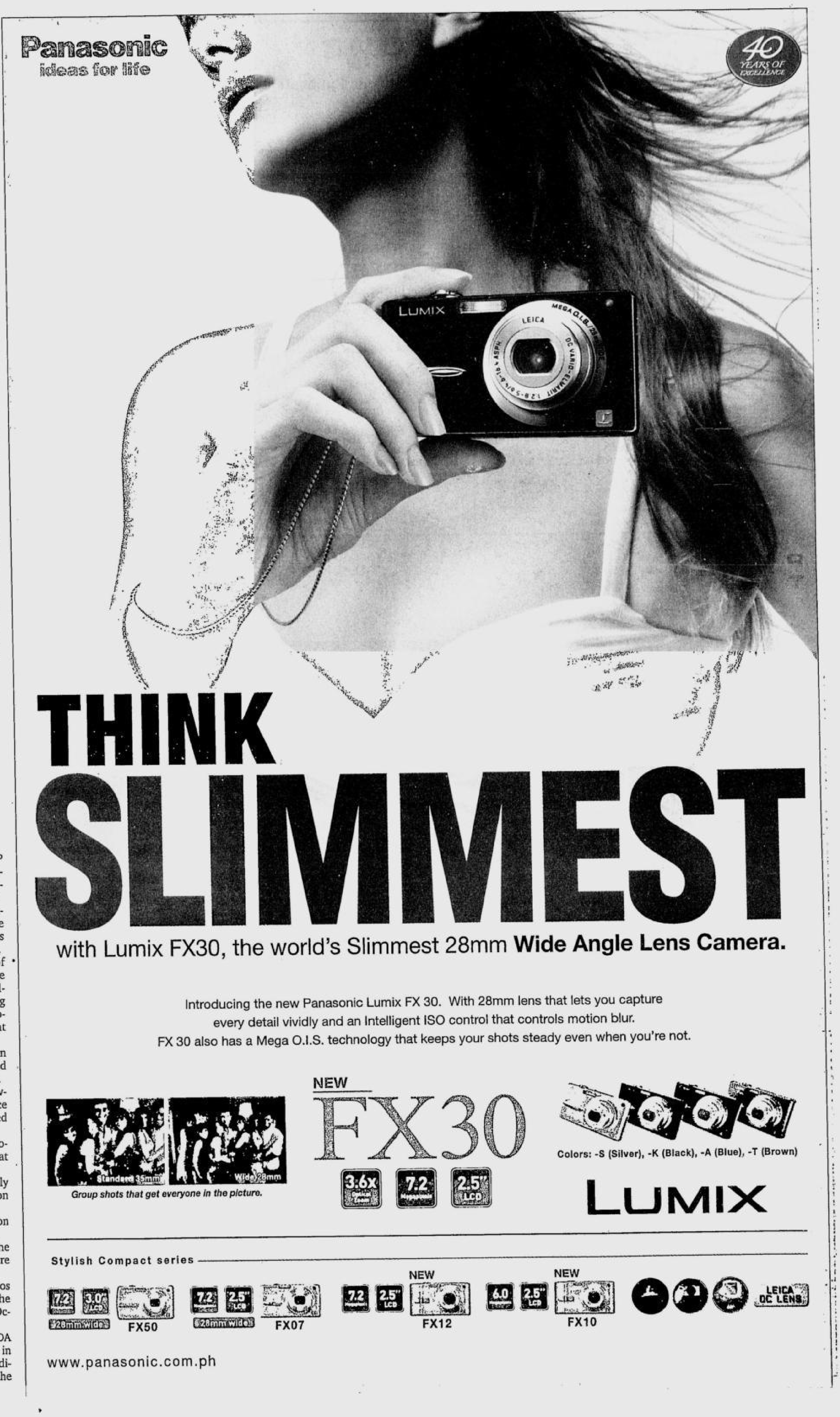
Filipinos, meanwhile, consume only around 10 metric tons (10,000 kilos) of onion a month or about 120 metric tons a year.

Nueva Ecija is the country's leading onion producer.

Some 18,000 hectares of farmland in the country are planted to onion, of which more than 10,000 hectares are in Nueva Ecija.

Shallots are produced mostly in the Ilocos region, while red onions abound in the provinces of Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija and Occidental Mindoro.

Besides protection from smuggling, the DA has also helped the local onion industry in tapping more markets by linking growers directly with institutional buyers through the Barangay Food Terminals.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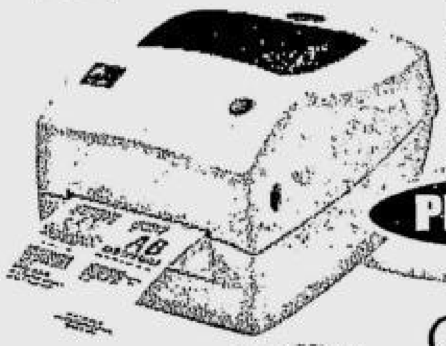

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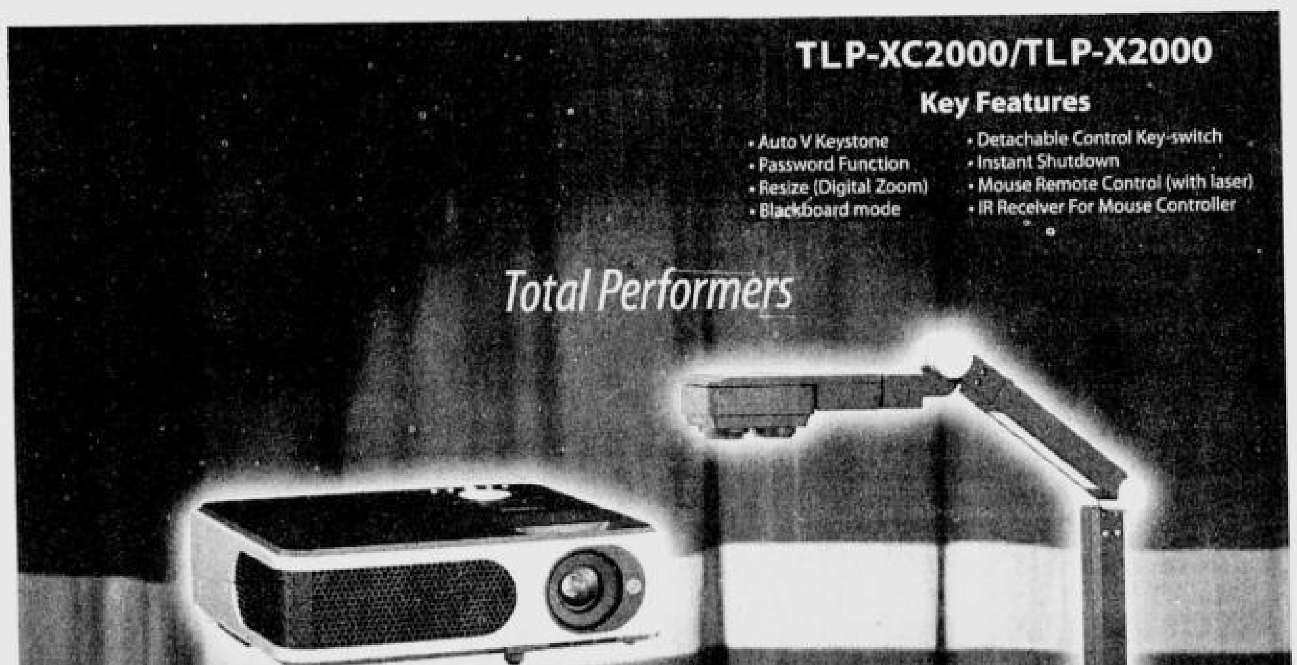

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 19, 2007)

52-WEEKS HIGH	52-WEEKS LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.2	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	13.75	14	12	13	739,700
71.5	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	71	71.5	70.5	70.5	649,900
73.5	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	72.5	72.5	71.5	72	3,796,200
935	630	China Banking Corp.	900	900	900	900	1,370
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	400
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	10,590,000
75	30.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	74.5	75	74	74	3,755,200
56.5	32	Philippine National Bank	54.5	55	54	54.5	264,900
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	100
39.57	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	35.5	37.5	35.5	36.5	4,219,300
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	82.5	84	82.5	84	37,200
66	41.54	Union Bank of the Philippines	61.5	62.5	61.5	62.5	489,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
3.81	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.25	3.25	320,000
1.46	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.14	1.3	1.14	1.22	5,195,000
9.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	9.2	9.7	9.2	9.7	687,000
1.04	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.95	970,000
1,710	1,500	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	240
5	4.05	Nat'l Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	9,201,000
2.95	0.99	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	144,000
1,005	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	685	690	670	690	6,210
2,250	1,895	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,070.00	2,080.00	2,070.00	2,070.00	160
1.94	1.16	iVantage Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1,027,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
66.5	41	First Gen Corp.	66	66.5	65.5	65.5	321,500
88	41	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	86	86	84.5	85	839,000
12.75	6.9	Manila Water Company Inc.	12	12.25	12	12	1,576,500
102	13.75	Manila Electric Company A	97	97.5	96	97	127,800
104	20.25	Manila Electric Company B	98.5	99	98	98	1,679,400
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	39,796,000
5.7	3.4	Petron Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	18,173,000
2.5	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.12	2.2	2.12	2.2	39,000
1.9	0.9	Trans-Asia Oil & Energy Dev't Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.64	1.66	3,478,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.6	150,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.34	2.34	2.3	2.32	1,801,000
8	1.9	Central Azucarera De Tarlac	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,000
2.75	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	1.64	1.8	1.64	1.8	4,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	10,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	55	55.5	55	55.5	575,400
25	20	Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	22	22	22	22	600
7	4.5	Pancake House Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	10,000
1.9	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.72	1.78	1.72	1.74	1,407,000
4.05	2.2	Roxas Holdings	2.46	2.46	2.44	2.44	314,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	68	68	67.5	67.5	52,000
88	68.5	San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	75.5	74.5	75	180,800
0.61	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	160,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.75	18	18.75	15,306,200
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.8	1.15	EEI Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	731,000
4.6	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	31,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.4	8.2	8.4	1,049,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	262,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	12,393,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.7	3,126,000
1.34	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.12	1.34	1.12	1.32	2,422,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	0.06	Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	4,700,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.7	3.65	3.7	691,000
0.145	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	75,240,000
1.18	0.18	APC Group Inc.	1.12	1.18	1.1	1.18	77,195,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.55	3.3	2.55	2.65	6,362,000
3.3	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. B	2.8	3.3	2.8	2.9	197,000
0.018	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	248,200,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	8,500,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.7	6,337,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.016	61,900,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.3	152,095,000
1.2	0.47	Alsons Cons Resources Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	160,000
1.5	0.085	Asia Amalgamated Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	540,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.55	2.55	6,463,000
16	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Company Inc. A	12	12	12	12	2,300
590	272.92	Ayala Corp.	575	580	570	575	630,410
12.5	6.96	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	10,900
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources & Holdings Co. Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.7	4.7	296,000
5.4	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	4,508,000
9.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9	9	8.8	8.8	1,163,000
1.9	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.4	1.68	1.4	1.68	320,000
7	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.5	7	6.5	7	7,550,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	25,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	12	1,573,900
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.4	168,000
0.69	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	730,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.65	0.72	0.65	0.68	270,000
30	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	25	27.5	24.75	26	2,562,000
10.5	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	9.1	10.5	9.1	10.5	22,909,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	72,000
0.034	0.009	Pacifica Inc. A	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	58,000,000
1.54	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.16	1.2	243,000
0.64	0.16	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.57	0.64	0.57	0.63	34,870,000
1.8	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.68	1.8	1.68	1.8	227,000
450	205	SM Investments Corp.	440	440	430	430	80,300
2.2	0.69	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.76	201,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.64	0.67	0.62	0.66	69,670,000
1.06	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.9	0.96	0.88	0.96	920,000
1.6	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.54	1.58	1.54	1.58	197,000
0.7	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.53	0.7	0.53	0.66	58,850,000
0.69	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.63	0.65	0.63	0.65	210,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.8	746,000
0.96	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.81	0.96	0.81	0.96	2,510,000
18.75	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	18.25	18.75	18.25	18.5	29,021,800
1.76	0.99	Belle Corp.	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.72	19,068,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.5	199,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.65	2.7	26,000
0.72	0.25	Crown Equities Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.67	4,910,000
0.66	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.56	0.66	0.56	0.64	43,440,000
3.1	0.72	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	809,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.82	0.82	21,610,000
0.32	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources & Hold'gs Inc.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	29,380,000
1.26	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.18	1.26	1.16	1.26	48,503,000
2.12	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.96	2.12	1.94	2.12	149,187,000
3.2	2.16	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.7	3.1	2.7	3.1	499,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	182,800,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	53,800,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.46	16,140,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.94	0.99	0.94	0.97	43,850,000
4.4	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4.2	4.2	4	4.05	17,242,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.25	4.35	4.25	4.35	83,000
0.67	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.55	0.67	0.55	0.62	80,010,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty & Holdings Corp.	0.64	0.66	0.64	0.66	17,330,000
5.8	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	267,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.25	9,221,300
5.4	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.3	1,784,000
14.25	7.1	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	6,725,000
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.82	0.82	2,830,000
0.36	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	11,940,000
		MEDIA					
34	13.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32	32	31.5	31.5	117,900
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	20,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.14	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.6	1.72	1.6	1.7	18,476,000
1,445	885	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,410.00	1,410.00	1,405.00	1,410.00	15,660
2,820	1,700	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co	2,650.00	2,650.00	2,635.00	2,640.00	129,660
7.9	3.15	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9	1,194,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.16	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.31	0.28	0.3	51,010,000
10.25	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	9	9	8.8	9	19,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6	6.4	6	6.4	599,000
0.0525	0.0263	ISM Communications Corp.	0.045	0.045	0.044	0.044	38,600,000
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.24	2.26	2.24	2.26	210,000
0.0875	0.038	Island Information & Technology Inc.	0.0825	0.085	0.0825	0.0825	18,600,000
2.08	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.9	2.06	1.9	1.96	1,405,000
0.06	0.027	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.0575	422,700,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Grp Int'l Inc.	3.75	4.1	3.75	3.95	59,936,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.72	1.82	1.7	1.82	1,052,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	138,000
32	13	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28	28	27.5	27.5	555,000
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2	2.02	2	2.02	972,000
1.74	0.8	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.24	1.38	1.24	1.38	64,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	3.8	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	7.1	7.1	7	7	4,000
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.4	3.4	885,000
0.98	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Prod'ns Inc.	0.84	0.87	0.84	0.84	5,670,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	1	1.08	1	1.06	5,700,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	400,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	27	27	27	27	1,000
5.2	1.88	Macroasia Corp.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.95	841,000
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	15.75	16	15.75	16	398,000
30	9.6	Paxys Inc.	25	25	25	25	27,900
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	415,500,000
7.6	3	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.1	168,000
7.7	3	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	241,000
21.25	5.9	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	18	18	17.5	18	1,311,300
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	13	13	13	13	26,000
5	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.2	26,000
2.85	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.55	2.7	2.55	2.7	93,782,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.27	4,200,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	820,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.035	79,900,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.037	0.037	0.036	0.036	47,500,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	37,700,000
6.4	3.15	Philex Mining Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	1,108,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	27	27	60,500
1.36	0.29	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.16	1.24	1.16	1.22	1,455,000
1.8	0.49	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.42	4,904,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	16,940,000
0.025	0.0085	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	43,200,000
0.027	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	127,600,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	30,900
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	314,900,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

C&P successor changes strategy, goes vertical

Readies P10B in high-rise projects

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE CORPORATE SUCCESSOR OF C&P Homes Inc. has chosen to focus on high-rise residential projects, marking a departure from the mass-housing strategy that almost bankrupted the firm founded by Sen. Manuel Villar.

In a statement, Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc. said it would put up at least five "vertical developments" with a combined value of P10 billion over the near term.

These projects include the 30-story Mosaic condominium in Legazpi Village and the triple-tower Laureano di Trevi condominium along Pasong Tamo, in Makati City; the 42-story Avant at The Fort and the triple tower mid-rise Pacific Residences, both in Taguig City; and the five-tower Marfori Residences in Sucat, Muntinlupa.

The projects are being undertaken by two of Vista Land's subsidiaries: Brittany Corp. for the Mosaic, Avant and Marfori Residences, and Camella for the Trevi and Pacific Residences.

Vista Land, which takes over the corporate identity of C&P Homes, remains the biggest homebuilder in the Philippines in terms of number of units sold, having dominated the horizontal housing industry for the last three decades.

The company's move into vertical developments is part of its effort to build up its presence in the high-end Makati and Fort Bonifacio central business districts.

The company is hoping to raise as much as P25 billion through a follow-on offering on the Philippine Stock Exchange later this year.

According to Vista Land, its Mosaic and Marfori Residences Tower 1 have been sold out, while Trevi Tower 1 was also sold out after less than a month of pre-selling. Avant and Pacific Residences have also been producing "encouraging results."

"Creating a landmark in Makati with Mosaic is a milestone for Brittany," Vista Land president and CEO Jing Serrano said in the statement. "Not only have we poised ourselves to enter the vertical segment, we have also conditioned the company structure for growth and expansion with this move."

The company chief added that Brittany would introduce more condo concepts within the year in Makati and in other key commercial and business districts in Metro Manila.

The Mosaic project marks the beginning of a P5-billion, two-year investment of Brittany in the Makati central business district. Meanwhile, the Avant project breaks new ground for Brittany within Bonifacio Global City.

"Becoming a part of the Bonifacio Global City was the natural progression for us," Serrano noted. "It is one of the country's major growth centers."

Vista Land is composed of four operating companies that serve different market segments, namely Brittany for luxury, high-end homes in master-planned communities, Crown Asia for large-scale, themed projects catering to the middle market, Camella Homes for the low-cost housing segment and Communities Philippines as the marketing arm.

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Your laughter reminds us that the quintessence of life is the spirit and selfless love.
As you join your hands and kneel with us in prayer, we are reminded of the open line to a loving Father in heaven. You give us the priceless legacy of faith.
You are all these to all of us and much more.
It means so much to have you for a father.
For what we are today and what we can be tomorrow, we owe to you.
And for this we are very grateful.

On this special day for fathers, and every day,
we would like you to know that WE LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.
We pray for your good health and long life.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

From: Sales Associates, Management and Staff of
PROVIDENT PLANS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION
Valero Plaza, 124 Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City

YUCHENGCO GROUP TO ACQUIRE ENTIRE SHARE OF NIPPON LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY OF THE PHILIPPINES (NLIP)

In line with its thrust of becoming a major player in the financial services business, the Yuchengco Group reached an agreement with Nippon Life Insurance Company of Japan (NLI) to acquire all Nippon Life Insurance Company of the Philippines, Inc. (NLIP) equity currently owned by NLI. The acquisition by the Yuchengco Group will be done through Great Pacific Life Assurance Corporation (Grepalife) and is subject to the approval by the Insurance Commission of the share transfer.

NLIP was originally established in February 1997 as a joint venture between the Yuchengco Group and NLI. In terms of distribution of shares, Grepalife holds 30% of NLIP's interest, while Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation holds 20% and NLI 50%.

Grepalife, the life insurance arm of the Yuchengco Group, has recently set out a business expansion plan with the ultimate goal of becoming one of the five major life insurers in the country by 2010 (based on insurance premium). Various options, including acquisition of existing life insurance businesses, have been considered to meet its goal.

Around the time of NLIP's recent 10th anniversary, discussions between the Yuchengco Group and NLI on future prospects regarding NLIP resulted in a proposal by the Yuchengco Group to buy all NLI shares. The parties came to a conclusion that the implementation of this proposal would be beneficial for both sides.

Both the Yuchengco Group and NLI recognize that NLIP's operations have been a success. For over a decade, NLIP has attained an influential position in the Filipino Life insurance industry, becoming the 13th (based on premium income as of 2006) among all life insurers operating in the Philippines.

NLI is putting more focus on developing its business in emerging markets, among which is the Philippines, which it considered as a growing market with a positive future. However, NLI decided to concentrate company resources on emerging markets with even higher growth estimates. It is clear that the experience in the Philippines will give NLI a head start.

The productive partnership between the Yuchengco Group and NLI over a decade of operation has fostered a friendly relationship that will continue despite the decision to part ways. NLI employees will be seconded to NLIP and assigned to the latter's "Japan Desk" for a period to be determined by the parties to ensure continuity of service to the Japanese corporate clients of NLIP.

The parties foresee that the closing of the share transfer will occur sometime in the latter part of the year when all of the conditions to the transfer have been fulfilled, including the issuance by the Insurance Commission of its approval of the share transfer.

GREPALIFE
GREAT PACIFIC LIFE ASSURANCE CORPORATION
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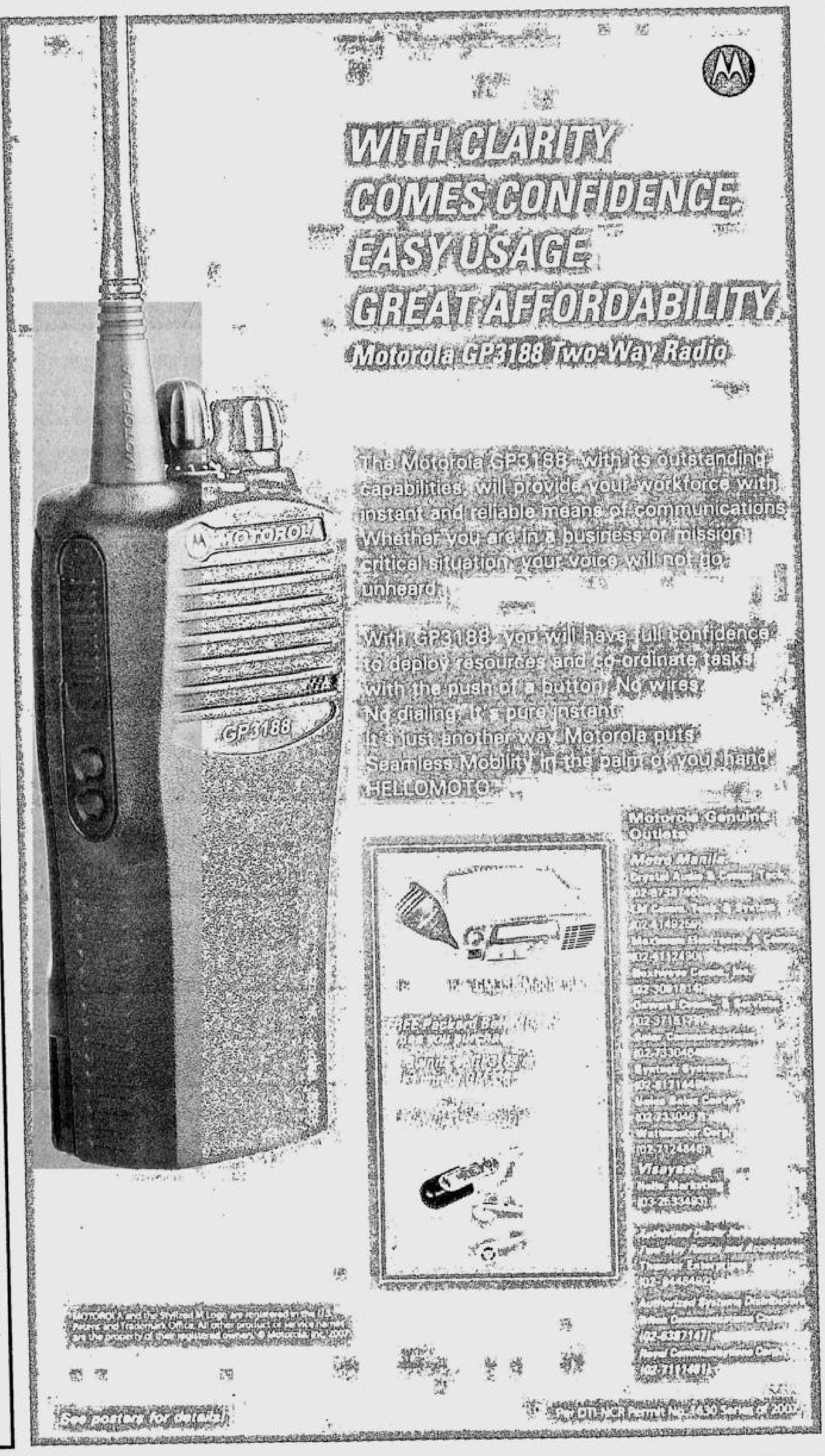

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10-year T-bond rate surges on deficit report

Rate of gov't instrument reached 7.268% in yesterday's auction

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S 10-YEAR TREASURY bond yesterday fetched a higher rate in the primary market, following news that the budget deficit as of the first five months of the year was higher than expected.

The rate for the 10-year bonds reached 7.268 percent in yesterday's auction, higher by 32.6 percent than the 6.942 percent recorded in its last auction in March last year.

Appetite for the long-term government securities were still strong, as evidenced by the volume of bids. Total tenders reached P10.75 billion—more than double the government's debt offering of only P5 billion.

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted P5 billion worth of bids, raising in full the borrowing requirement set for yesterday's auction.

Roberto Tan, Finance Undersecretary and officer-in-charge of the Bureau of the Treasury, said that although the interest rate for the 10-year bonds increased from that of March, it was only slightly higher than secondary market rates.

Tan noted that 10-year bonds fetched 7.125 percent in the secondary market yesterday morning.

Analysts said, however, that the increase in interest rate had to do partly with concerns over the government's fiscal position, which adversely affected its degree of credit riskiness.

The higher-than-expected deficit as of the first five months of the year indicated that the government was having a hard time sustaining its fiscal gains last year. In January to May, the deficit had hit P41.8 billion, exceeding the first-half ceiling of P31.3 billion.

In 2006, the government posted a deficit of only P64.8 billion, much lower than the previous year's P146.8 billion.

This year, the government wants to trim the deficit further to P63 billion and totally wipe it out by next year.

But Tan said so long as the interest rates sought by government securities investors were not absurdly high and was in line with secondary market rates, the auction committee would continue to accept the bids.

The government's deficit as of the first five months of the year was blamed on shortfalls in tax collection which, in turn, was attributed partly to administrative inefficiencies of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The BIR points to the slowdown in inflation, which it said resulted in lower-than-expected collection of value-added tax, and the strategies implemented by tobacco manufacturing firms to evade payment of higher excise taxes.

The government's ability to meet its deficit-reduction goals is closely watched by investors, credit rating agencies and creditors.

$3-BILLION COMMITMENT

President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes Wei Jia Fu, president and CEO of China Ocean Shipping Group, to the Palace. The Chinese executive bared his company's plan to build a $3-billion maritime complex at Sangley Point in Cavite.

INQUIRER PHOTO/EDWIN BACASMAS

In 2007, gov't expects GOCCs to remit ₱21B

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE SAID IT wants government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) to contribute about P21 billion to state coffers this year, in line with the objective of instilling fiscal discipline among them.

Finance Undersecretary Jeremias Paul Jr. said state-owned firms were expected to remit P10 billion worth of dividends to the national government, and another P11 billion in payment of guarantee fees.

The national government charges a fee on a GOCC that contracts a loan and whose obligation is covered by a sovereign guarantee.

"As a general rule, a state-owned firm should contribute its fair share to the government," Paul yesterday said during a press conference on the government's fiscal performance as of May. "If a GOCC posts a net income, then it should remit dividends."

The government collected P16 billion in dividends from GOCCs last year—a historic high. Fiscal authorities said although state-owned firms might not be able to contribute the same amount of dividends this year, they should perform better in terms of average dividends with each passing year.

Paul said that, on the average, GOCCs remit P7 billion in dividends to the national government. Requiring them to remit P3 billion more, or 43-percent higher, this year would encourage improvement in financial management.

He said the DOF has raised its expectations from GOCCs, asking them to remit dividends once they post a net income. The government used to allow state-owned firms with net income to escape remitting dividends if they do not post retained earnings.

As of end-April, Paul said, the national government already received P1.2 billion worth of dividends from its equity shares in state-owned firms. The amount was the combined remittances by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Philippine Ports Authority and the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., among others, he added.

The target of generating P21 billion in dividends and guarantee fees from GOCCs this year is intended to help the government meet its budget deficit target of P63 billion this year.

Last year's budget deficit of P64.8 billion was a marked reduction from the P146.8 billion recorded in 2005. But the government is seen to be hard pressed in meeting its goal to reduce the deficit this year.

In January to May, the deficit hit P41.8 billion, exceeding the first-half ceiling of P31.3 billion.

Michelle V. Remo

Buying insurance via the Internet

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

INSURANCE COMPANIES SELL THEIR policies through thousands of agents and brokers deployed around the country. In life insurance alone, there are over 30,000 agents. Well over half are women.

Sometimes armed with laptops, they pound the streets and pounce on prospective buyers. This time-honored marketing method of face-to-face interviews between intermediary and buyer is still in wide use all over the world.

But in this era of information technology, there is a new marketing method. The other day, there was an INQUIRER ad on how to insure your car via the Internet.

Buying insurance via the Internet seems to be getting more popular in the United States. When I was there last Christmas, I saw an ad from an insurance broker.

I assumed an interested car owner negotiated terms with the broker through e-mail. When the terms were agreed upon, the owner authorized, also by e-mail, the debiting of the premium against his credit card.

The transaction is very high-tech.

In the INQUIRER ad, the insurance company was the advertiser. Let us take a close look at the proposed deal.

First, if a car owner knows what policy to buy, what terms under which he wants the policy to be written, what is the right price he has to pay, and the advertiser is acceptable to him, he could negotiate directly with the company.

Otherwise, it is best for the car owner to use the services of an insurance agent or broker to do the buying for him.

Second, the company is a party-in-interest; in fact, it is the party of the first part in the insurance contract. The car owner is the party of the second part.

It is not usually advisable for the party of the second part to negotiate eye-to-eye with the party of the first part when the former is not on the same level of competence as the latter.

As a fellow broker puts it, while it is true that things are cheaper at the *palengke*, you have to know how to haggle; otherwise, you can get clipped. If you do not know how to haggle, it is better to shop at the supermarket where everything has a price tag.

Third, the premium you pay to the insurance company includes the commission to the agent or broker. If you buy your policy directly from the company, you pay the commission just the same, but without getting the valuable services of the agent or broker.

Finally, when you buy any kind of an insurance policy, keep in mind that you are hoping for the best, but, at the same time, you are ready for the worst.

In other words, you insure your car in the hope that you will never have an accident. But if you do have an accident, you are ready for the worst. To be ready for the worst, you have to have a well-written policy.

If you do have a claim under your policy, you will need an agent or broker to help you. I have always said that when the insured has a claim, that is when the agent or broker really earns his commission. He uses his know-how, his connections and his clout to get the claim paid fairly and fast.

Which brings up this question: What makes a good agent or broker? He is full-time. He makes a good living selling insurance. He comes highly recommended. Ask your friends to recommend a good agent or broker. When you find him, you will have a very valuable friend and ally.

Pearl Asian sees ₱125M from mine operation

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PEARL ASIAN MINING INDUSTRIES INC. EXpects to generate an initial annual gross revenue of some $2.74 million, or about P125 million, from the operation of three mining sites in Masbate, Bukidnon and Cagayan de Oro where it is based.

PAIM, which trades on the United States' Over the Counter Bulletin Board, said engineers are reconditioning and refurbishing the existing processing mills in both the Aroroy gold mine in Masbate and the Gango Gold Rush project in Bukidnon.

The firm reported that the Aroroy gold mill was capable of processing up to 7.2 metric tons of gold ores a day.

Based on actual gold recoveries obtained in about 17 years of previous operation, the Aroroy project produces an average of 17 grams of gold per ton of ore, equivalent to 3.9 ounces of gold a day.

Also, the Gango project's existing gold processing plant is capable of processing up to 15 metric tons of ores daily, with an average recovery of at least 15 grams per ton, producing 7.3 ounces of gold a day.

The third mine, the Binasan gold project in Cagayan de Oro, "is continuously increasing" its gold recovery, with production currently averaging around 18 grams, equivalent to 0.5 ounce of gold daily.

PAIM said that, based on a price of $560 per ounce of gold and 360 days of production yearly, the Aroroy project is expected to yield an initial gross revenue of $912,600; Gango with $1.7 million; and Binasan with $117,000.

The company has a team studying each mine site, with the Aroroy team exploring and mining a total of 18 hectares of land area. It aims to complete a detailed feasibility and geological exploration by the end of the month.

Randolf Villanueva, company executive president, said the Aroroy mine had recorded a profit of at least $600,000 in 1990 when the owner recovered minerals the old-fashioned way.

"More than 200 kilograms or 6,430 ounces of gold has been extracted from 1990," Villanueva said. "Currently, the mine site has two working tunnels. But more tunnels will be developed once geological mapping is completed."

Napocor, Meralco ink deal for bulk power sales program

By Abigail L. Ho

THE MANILA ELECTRIC CO., THE country's largest private electric utility, has signed an agreement with the state-run National Power Corp., which allows the Lopez-led company to continue submitting bids for lower-priced electricity under the one-day power sales program.

The two signed the agreement, which will give Meralco's large power users access to cheaper electricity, while the implementing rules and regulations of the enhanced one-day power sales (e-ODPS) program are still being fine-tuned.

Under the agreement, Napocor will send to Meralco by 2 p.m. every Wednesday the minimum price of electricity available through the ODPS for the week ahead.

Prior to this agreement, Napocor sent the same data to Meralco two weeks in advance.

Meralco, for its part, will submit to Napocor the aggregate bids of its 36 industrial customers by 1 p.m. every Friday.

The agreement likewise provides Meralco customers the flexibility to bid every hour and for any bid quantity, as long as that amount is within the customer's maximum allowed bid.

With the old system, customers participating in the ODPS had to bid for a whole 24-hour block.

In two weeks, Napocor president Cyril Del Callar said it would sign another agreement with Meralco, one that would formalize the latter's participation in the e-ODPS scheme.

Napocor's e-ODPS program was still built around the former ODPS scheme, which was launched in 1998. It was just improved to give customers more benefits, apart from lower electricity rates.

The Internet-based bidding method that the e-ODPS employs gives customers the flexibility to address their specific power requirements over a 24-hour period.

Those who will choose to buy electricity under the new scheme can also choose from different tenors, ranging from one day to one year or even more, via the program's day-ahead, month-ahead and year-ahead markets.

To settle their bills, customers can use the program's electronic banking system.

SMC shareholders may hold joint sale with gov't

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SAID IT would be willing to jointly sell its shares in San Miguel Corp. (SMC) with interested shareholders from the private sector.

A finance official involved in the government's privatization effort, agreed with suggestions that a joint sale would boost the price of the equity assets.

But the official clarified that the government could not negotiate for a joint sale with Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., with whom the government has an ownership dispute over another bloc of SMC shares.

The government is selling its 25-percent stake in SMC to boost revenue and reduce the budget deficit. Government revenue agencies recently have been posting shortfalls in tax collection.

The Department of Finance earlier estimated that the government could raise P50 billion from the sale of the SMC shares.

Aside from the shares, the government is likewise claiming rights over another 20-percent stake currently held by Cojuangco, chair of San Miguel Corp. Authorities claim that Cojuangco used the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses to acquire the SMC stake.

The DOF's statement that the government would be willing to jointly sell its SMC stake with private sector shareholders followed the move of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Social Security System (SSS) to sell their respective shares on their own.

A MAN cleans the roof of a warehouse stacked with cases of San Miguel beer. The government is open to the idea of selling its stake in San Miguel Corporation together with shareholders from the private sector. AP

The DOF earlier called on the GSIS and the SSS to sell their shares jointly with the government, explaining that the move would push up the price of the shares. But the two pension fund managers opted to sell their stakes on their own.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that the DOF respects the decision of the SSS and the GSIS. The SSS sold its shares to San Miguel Retirement Fund, an SMC subsidiary. The GSIS did not disclose to whom it sold its shares, but industry sources said these were bought back by SMC.

(The SSS and GSIS) said they were able to get a good price by selling immediately rather than wait for the national government," Teves said.

The government is still ironing out administrative matters before it sells its shares, he said. It expects to hold the sale within the year.

The government hopes to reduce its budget deficit to P63 billion this year from the P64.8 billion last year. The government, however, was having difficulty sticking to its fiscal target.

As of May, the deficit hit P41.8 billion, exceeding the first-half ceiling of P31.3 billion. To meet its first-half target, the government now has to post a P10.5-billion surplus this June.

Apart from the SMC stake, the government is likewise selling its shares in Manila Electric Co., the Al-Amanah Islamic Bank and the old Iloilo airport, among others.

Michelle V. Remo

A Message of Appreciation

We, the family of the late

SIMONA C. ALIKPALA, M.D.

28 October 1916 – 11 May 2007

express our heartfelt gratitude to those who condoled with us through their visits, flowers, cards, messages of sympathy, donations, offertory of Masses and prayers, attendance to her funeral rites and memorial services, and, who in countless ways helped and comforted us during our moment of grief.

Please continue to pray for her eternal repose in heaven.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." *John 11:25-26*

Our dearly beloved Tatay

PASTOR C. MADRID

peacefully joined his Creator on June 17, 2007 at the age of 97.

His bereaved family: wife Concordia (†); children Ernesto & Teresita, Jorge, Virgilio and Jean, Remedios, Roberto (†) and Susan; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at No. 5 Isagani St., Acacia, Malabon City.

Interment wil be tomorrow, June 21, 2007 at the Eternal Garden Memorial Park, Caloocan City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even though he dies, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."
John 11:25-26

JOSE ALFONSO I. CADIZ

"Joni"

Naga Parochial School, 1971; Ateneo de Naga High School, 1975;
UP Sigma Rho Fraternity, 1979; UP BS Geology, 1981

Oil Exploration Geologist, Baker Hughes InteQ

peacefully joined our Creator on June 18, 2007 at the age of 48.

His loving family, his wife **Florence**, children **Migoy**, **Pia** and **Gabby**; parents **Joe** and **Fe**, brothers and sisters-in-law **Jojo** and **Encar**, **Joel** and **Alma**, **Joy** and **Luz**, **Fabi**, sisters and brother-in-law **Petite**, **Peachy** and **Phil**, nieces and nephews, **Anjeli**, **Krissie** and **Jeric**, **Jica**, **Jolo** and **Jano**, **Bianca** and **Kristen**, **Danica** and **Joshua**, parents-in-law **Ponso** and **Perla**, brothers and sisters-in-law, other relatives, fraternity brothers, classmates and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at The Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church, West Triangle, Quezon City.

UP Sigma Rho Fraternity Necrological and Final Rites is on Thursday, June 21, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Cremation will be on Friday, June 22, 2007 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City immediately after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at The Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Ateneo de Naga H.S. '75 Scholarship Foundation.

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.
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GEORGE BOCOBO OLIVAR, JR.

Former Professor, College of Business Administration
University of the Philippines

August 27, 1943 – June 16, 2007

He is survived by his loving wife, **Sylvia Calingo-Olivar**; children: **Althea & Chris Duque**, and **Audric**; siblings: **Cheryl & Ed Olsen**, **Gary & Baby**, **Godfrey & Louella**, **Gene & Jhette**, and **Gordon & Llena**; nephews, nieces, uncles, aunts, cousins and in-laws.

His family requests relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park Cemetery, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will take place at the Manila Memorial Park on Friday, June 22, 2007 after the 1:00 p.m. Memorial Service.

ALBERTO A. AGUJA, JR.

July 23, 1949 - June 14, 2007

His loving wife **Erlinda**, children and children-in-law **Ma. Carmela & Kenneth Legaspi**, **Ma. Lourdes & Jay Camara**; granddaughter **Klaudia Louise**; brothers, sisters and in-laws **Trinidad & Fernando Tonolete**, **Teresita Aguja-Torres**, **Marciano**, **Servita & Rodolfo Aguilar**, **Lino & Amelia**, **Marcelo** and **Magno**; his nephews, nieces and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence in P. Burgos St., Ponong, Carigara, Leyte.

Interment will be at the Carigara Catholic Cemetery on Friday, June 22, 2007, after the 10:00 a.m. Mass at the Holy Cross Parish Church.

SERGIO VIER DIZON

September 9, 1933 to June 16, 2007

Sergio V. Dizon peacefully joined our Creator on June 16 at his home.

He is survived by his wife, **Amelia**; children **Erwin** and **Irene**, **Evan** and **Eden**, **Ernie** and **Liz**, **Giselle** and **Cornelio**; grandchildren, **Mico**, **Martin**, **Steffi**, **Cassandra**, **Elanie**, **Sofie** and **Bryan**.

His family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. He will be remembered as a loving husband, father and grandfather who gave unselfishly of himself to his family and to others in need.

His remains lie in state at 56 Daang Maharlika, Labo, Camarines Norte. Interment will be on June 23, Saturday, 1 p.m. at the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, Labo, Camarines Norte.

In Loving Memory
on the 22nd Death Anniversary of

TAN GO SU

on June 20, 2007

The Holy Mass will be offered today at the following churches:

Basilica Minore, Malolos City, Bulacan	6:00 a.m.
Barasoain Church, Malolos City, Bulacan	6:00 a.m.
Saint Jude Catholic Church, Binondo, Manila	6:00 a.m.
Mary the Queen, San Juan, Manila	6:00 a.m.

We, The Family, who remember him so dearly, request relatives, friends and the pious readers to join us in our prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
— 2 Corinthians 5:4-5

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Automakers, environmentalists clash over fuel consumption

By Tessa R. Salazar

(First of two parts)

LOS ANGELES—MOUNTING interest in global warming and overdependence on fossil fuels are affecting vehicle fuel-efficiency standards in this part of the world, with vehicle-related bills facing close scrutiny and undergoing heated debate among US lawmakers.

Disagreements are also building up between the auto industry giants and environment advocates on what the ideal standards for vehicles' fuel consumption should be.

In recent weeks, several issues have surrounded the new fuel economy bill. This has included increasing the corporate average fuel economy (Cafe) standards or fleet-wide average fuel economy standards for vehicles to 35 miles per gallon (18 to 19 km per liter) for cars, SUVs and trucks by 2020 and 4 percent higher each year after that. The current standard in the United States is 27.5 mpg (14 to 15 km/liter) for passenger cars and 22.2 mpg (11 to 12 km/liter) for light trucks.

Automakers quipped this new bill as unattainable, while environment advocates found these so-called "tougher standards" quite disappointing, adding that the new bill has "loopholes."

Matt Stone, executive editor of Motor Trend magazine, told INQUIRER Motoring that there has to be a reasonable compromise. "Government regulations, consumer wants and needs, technology and the ability to make a profit, all have to live together in the same world."

Overly aggressive

"I think the environmentalists are overly aggressive here. It will take a huge amount of work, investment and technology advance to get to 35 mpg by 2020. Consumers will foot the bill. How much will they be willing to spend for it?" Stone asked.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, Cafe standards have increased new car and truck fuel economy by 70 percent between 1975 and 1988. In 2000 alone, Cafe saved American consumers $92 billion, reduced oil use by 60 billion gallons, and kept 720 million tons of global warming pollution out of the atmosphere.

The original schedule for Cafe improvements ended in 1985, leaving Congress and the US administration responsible for future improvements—none of which have been pursued, leading to the current drop in fuel economy of the national vehicle fleet.

John Berlau, author of the "Eco Freaks—Environmentalism Is Hazardous to Health," said that automakers achieved Cafe's mandated goals through a series of steps that left families who needed the protection of big cars with less choices and higher costs.

Berlau quoted a 2002 National Academy of Sciences calculation that Cafe's mandates caused 2,000 additional traffic deaths per year. Berlau also quoted a USA Today analysis of data from the government and the Insurance Institute in 1999 which found that since Cafe went into effect in the 1970s, 46,000 people were killed in car crashes they likely would have survived had they been traveling in larger, heavier cars.

4 countries

The Union of Scientists stressed that only four nations in the world produced more heat-trapping carbon dioxide than the US vehicle fleet. The pollution they cause, UCS stressed, is expected to worsen smog, an increase in asthma-triggering pollens and molds, and a substantial rise in the number of heat-related illnesses and deaths.

UCS also said that every minute, US consumers send hundreds of thousands of dollars overseas to buy oil, and the US reliance on foreign oil is continuing to grow. Part of the problem is that the fuel economy of new passenger vehicles peaked in 1988 and is declining due to stagnant federal standards, more and more miles being driven, and increased sales of inefficient SUVs and light trucks.

FUEL ECONOMY!

The 24 hours of Le Mans

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, the 75th running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans—billed as the hardest race in the world—will have been over. Unfortunately, as a motor sport, Le Mans is not as universally followed as Formula One.

Le Mans deserves more attention worldwide. An endurance race covering nearly 5,200 kilometers over a 24-hour period, Le Mans compresses the equivalent of a Grand Prix season into one day without changing the engine, the brake pads or discs, the gearbox, the suspension or anything in the car.

You may wonder: how can any driver race that distance in one day without collapsing from sheer exhaustion and stress? A set of feature articles on Le Mans written by Brad Spurgeon in the International Herald Tribune enlightens us.

Nonstop

Since Le Mans is a 24-hour nonstop race, each of the 55 competing teams has three drivers who do average stints of one-and-a-half hours each, split up by a pit stop to refuel. No one drives more than 14 hours total. The drivers will turn laps at more than 200 kilometers per hour (kph), with the fastest reaching speeds exceeding 300 kph on the fastest parts of the circuit.

Their bodies pushed with 200 kilograms of lateral pressure when negotiating corners, their thought processes dulled by hours of intensely fixed concentration, the drivers often feel their hearts racing at 165 to 180 beats per minute and their heads weighing more than twice the usual weight while vibration, rain and darkness weaken their eyesight.

Each driver has a three-hour break between stints, but after the debriefing with engineers and other tasks, they only have about two hours of rest. The team's physiotherapist assists the drivers in every aspect of managing their physical and mental health, from eating and drinking to sleeping and treating pains or administering first aid. At times, psychological support is also needed.

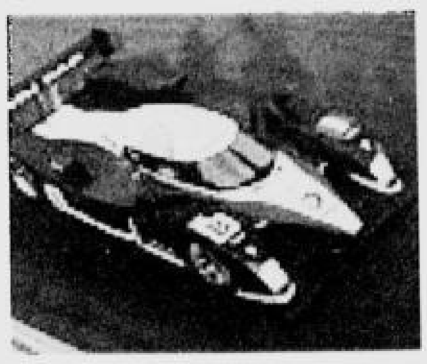
Dangerous

Still running partly on public highways, the circuit of Le Mans has changed little over the years since the first 24-hour event was held in 1923. The circuit remains one of the most dangerous in the world as each corner is different and requires deep concentration to master with some curves negotiated at more than 200 kph. It is difficult for drivers to memorize the track. The average Le Mans lap measures 13.6 km and requires more than three minutes to complete, compared to the average Formula One lap of about 5 km needing a little more than a minute to complete.

While Formula One has only 22 cars competing, Le Mans had 55 cars and 165 drivers this year The fact that there are four classes of cars with a winner in each class adds to the excitement. Because of the vast differences in speed between the classes of cars, drivers are constantly overtaking or being overtaken and this requires even more concentration on their part.

Top class

The top class of cars, code-named LM P1, consists of the most technically advanced prototype racing machines with engines delivering as much as 700 horsepower and top speeds of well over 300 kph on the straight. This is the class in which the big manufacturers compete and from which the first finisher overall most often emerges.



PEUGEOT 908

Unlike the three other vehicle classes, LM P1 allows turbodiesel engines. Last year, Audi stunned the motor racing world by becoming the first car manufacturer to win Le Mans using a diesel engine. Audi's audacious victory provoked Peugeot to return this year to Le Mans after an absence of 13 years to challenge Audi, also with a diesel engine. (Peugeot won Le Mans in 1992 and 1993 while Audi dominated every edition except one of the 24 Hours of Le Mans race from 2000 to 2006. But the Bentley that won the year when Audi "failed" to win was powered by an Audi engine.)

LM P2 also consists of prototypes, albeit less expensive, less powerful and lighter. In 2006, the top average speed in LM P2 was rated at 219 kph and approximate horsepower was 550.

Modified

LM GT1 cars are modified production models or road cars—Corvettes, Aston Martins, Porsches, Ferraris—with approximate 600 hp. Some of the LM GT1 cars have amateur drivers and teams. Le Mans has a long tradition of admitting gentlemen drivers, a few of whom are celebrities like actor Paul Newman, who finished second in 1979. LM GT2 cars are production models with minor modifications and 500 approximate horsepower. Like the GT1, these cars are street-legal.

Summing up, as Brad Spurgeon describes Le Mans: "No other race or series can match the combination of technological prowess, driver skill, stamina and teamwork. No other track like this one is still in use today."

P.S. The diesel-fueled Audi R10 won the 75th edition of Le Mans with Peugeot finishing second.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Better to understand a little than to misunderstand a lot.

Losing the plot

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

YOU ARE RAKING THROUGH THE GEARS with purpose; maximizing the torque of your engine with every change of ratio. The speedometer is climbing but never more than what the road needs, never more than what the bends and twists of the tarmac can take.

The engine hums along, breaking its drone only for lifts in the accelerator, shutter quick gear changes and gas pedal blips that meet each corner. Pressure on the brake pedal is measured in mere steady dabs. Balance is displayed with subtle skill, allowing the car to be settled on its axis before every slight steering input, every change in direction.

There is a barely any tire squeal, just the right amount of drama, just enough to announce to anyone within an earshot that your drive means business.

The road is flawless. Traffic is nonexistent. The pencil lead-colored asphalt disappears under your tires and endless ribbons of it still fill your windshield. It does not matter what make and model you are driving. This is just one of those perfect days.

Driving out of necessity

Yet to many out there, even those who are motorists like us, the beauty of driving is lost. Like ants marching to the whims of their colony, they merely see driving as something that needs to be done as a means to an end. Passion, in these cases, is a word that might as well not exist. Nevertheless driving out of necessity is something that all of us must endure.

In our everyday lives, the act of getting a vehicle out of its parking slot, taking it through a congested road network and into another slot at the day's destination is inescapable. Human beings need to move about in an efficient, comfortable and practical manner and the car primarily exists for this single, mundane purpose. The tedium can take its toll even on the most enthusiastic of us. Often whatever goes on in getting to and from points A and B is just seen as nuisances.

This is where jaded, cynical pessimists who take the wheel have lost the proverbial plot. Sad really when such things happen. Considering the substantial amount of time spent inside cars on a daily basis, we should strive to find the little things that make driving worth every second.

Important part of driving

I'll let you in on a little secret, ladies and gentlemen. The important part of driving is what goes on from the time you start your engine to the moment you power it down. Even in the dullest and most frustrating situations, a little magic can be found. All it takes is a change of perspective. Challenge yourself and learn rather than curse your dumb luck or the idiot next to you in traffic. Once you get over the little annoying things, appreciating your time behind the wheel can begin.

About to go postal because of the murderous traffic that stands between your home and the office? Explore. Find a new, freer flowing route to your place of work. You'll be surprised how a roundabout course can sometimes save on time and driver patience. No such alternative exists for you? Learn the road. Seek out the lanes that move the fastest, figure out where the bottlenecks are.

The rising costs of fuel getting to you? Change your driving style. Go with the flow of traffic, don't try to fight it. Anticipate what the cars around you are doing. Figure out the best operating conditions for your engine and vehicle, like rpm, brand of fuel and even tire pressure. Meticulously record and try to better your fuel consumption. Game the problem; don't give up in the face of it.

Stuck with an old clunker for a daily drive, something unreliable and testy? Learn your car. It's simple really. Figure that the age of your vehicle should be directly proportional to your knowledge of its mechanical workings. The older your car gets, the more problems are going to creep out of the sheet metal. Don't fret. All mechanical things break in their own time and the moment you come to terms with this age-old precept, the less sleep you will lose.

The whole point of the matter is plain. The more you give in the direction of patience, the more it will pay back. Couple this with learning better technique and little by little, small moments will start to come to you. The road will cease to look like a place of misery and irritation. It will become your place of solace like it is mine. And one of these days it will eventually reward you with a perfect drive.

Daring to face challenges

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

THE TOYOTA ROAD TREK HAS BECOME one of the popular red-letter days in the local motoring media's calendar.

This annual event that promotes Toyota's best-selling international innovative multipurpose vehicles—Fortuner, Innova and Hilux—as they take media participants from one exotic location to the other, also dares them to face some of their worst fears.

Consider one of this year's challenges: rappel down a 50-meter waterfall and afterward, jump off a 10-meter ledge into the murky and frenetic waters below—while being timed (reminding you of that two American hit TV shows "The Amazing Race" and "Fear Factor").

To Negros Oriental

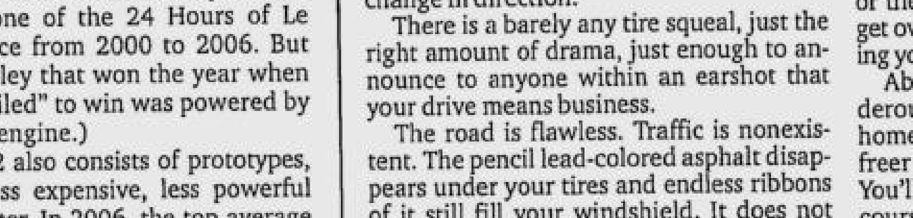
For this year's edition, the Toyota Road Trek went to Oriental Negros where participants underwent three but tougher challenges mostly water-related adventure tasks.

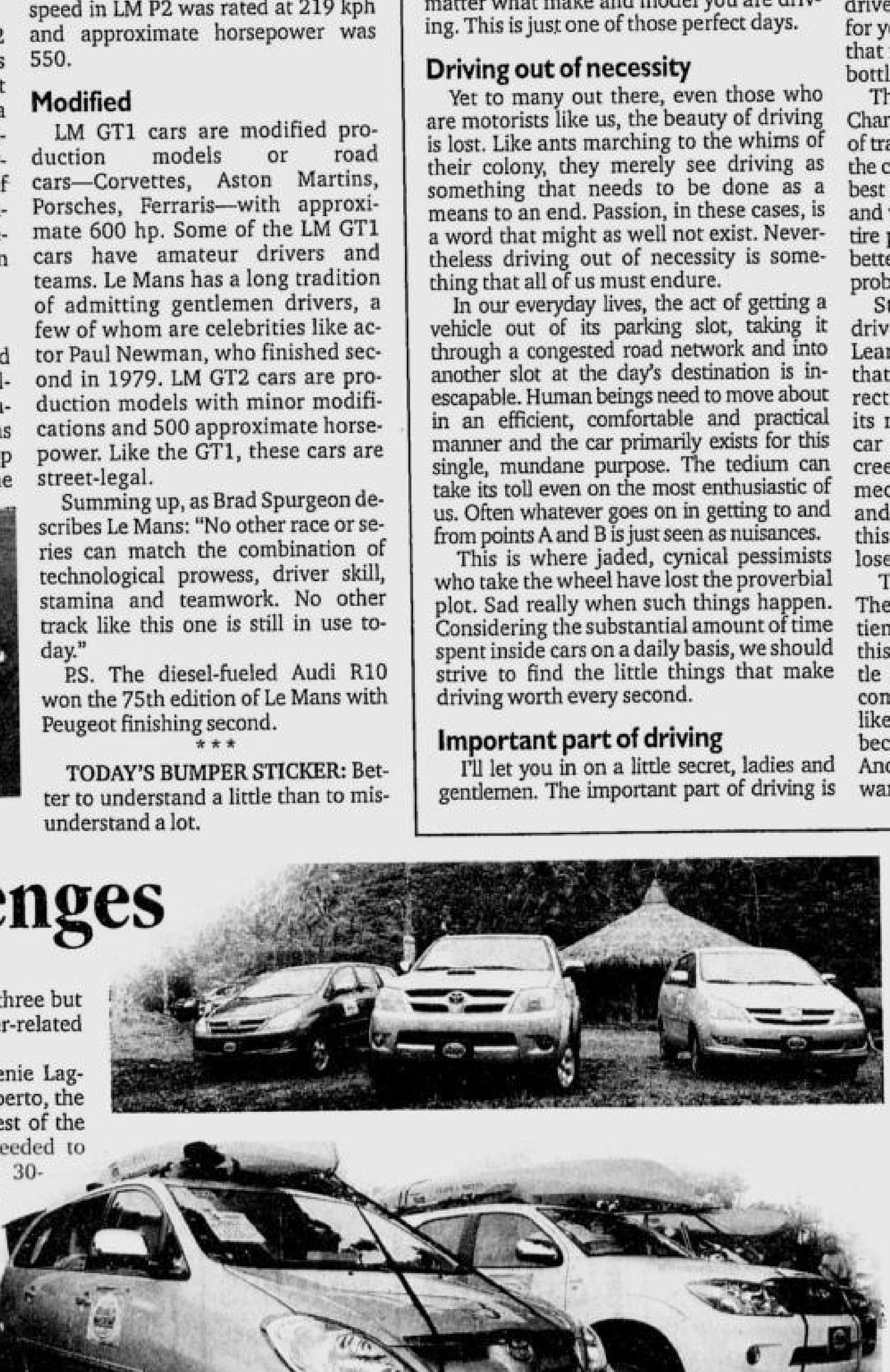
Composed of this writer, Genie Lagman, Noli Navarro and Deo Roberto, the INQUIRER team as well as the rest of the participants immediately proceeded to the town of Sibulan (about 30-minute drive from Dumaguete airport) where the twin lakes of Balinsasayao are located.

Here, the 10 teams competed in a kayaking relay, where our team ended up fourth.

Bolstered by this fairly good ranking, our team didn't mind the three-hour drive to Niludhan Falls in Bayawan City where the second challenge awaited us.

Unfortunately, our team's hopes for a better finish were soon doused as this writer got stalled while descending the dizzying 50-meter drop (reasons ranged from foot getting caught on protruding tree roots to suffering from a mild attack of acrophobia).





THE TOUGHNESS as well as comfort of the Toyota IMV were also tested during this years edition of the Road Trek

Final challenge

The following day, the teams proceeded to Apo Island, a small volcanic isle about 35-minute boat ride away from Bahura Resort and Spa in the town of Dauin (where the participants spent the night).

The third and final challenge required the participants to dive for the key that corresponds to a certain IMV model, as well as points. In addition, the model picked will be the team's ride as the whole group transfers to Marco Polo Plaza in Cebu City (of course, the best choice would be the Fortuner, for the ride comfort as well as cabin space it offers).

The INQUIRER team ended up driving an automatic Hilux, which is not bad either.

In the end, our team rolled into the finish somewhere in the middle (sixth overall). However, the rankings no longer mattered that awarding night: The mere fact that we were all enjoying and cheering despite all the difficulties encountered was more than enough a reward for us all.

Affi trade show showcases homegrown brands

MORE THAN 175 FRANCHISE EXhibitors, small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and an estimated 20,000 visiting business enthusiasts are set to meet the "homegrown brands" in one of the country's biggest franchise trade shows dubbed as "AFFI Franchise @ 10", slated at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall from July 6 to 8.

The trade show, under the auspices of the Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc (Affi), seeks to consolidate the country's franchising companies and SMEs and foster more dynamic business opportunities for budding entrepreneurs and expanding enterprises and companies.

This will showcase a myriad of local brand names such as food firms Lots' A Pizza, Fiorgelato, Figaro Coffee Company, Chicharific, Aquabest, Tea Square, Bibingkinitan, Fruitas, Brother's Burger, Goto King, Goodah, Tacomio and a lot more.

Participating service and retail companies include Reyes Haircutters, Seaoil, Bobson, Call Center Academy, Ahead Tutorial and Vintel Logistics among other service oriented organizations/ brands.

Also set to join the trade show are Affi new members and recruits: Cocozen beauty cart endorsed by Cory Quirino, the health and beauty icon, Hot Pink Lingerie, GS Pagtakhan Lechon Manok, Godiva, SIP Brain Enhancement, Pop Flash, YSA Skin Care and Bayad Center.

Mini Stop, the first non-Filipino affiliate and a 24-hour convenience store, is now part of Affi's circle.

Figaro, owned by coffee magnate Pacita "Chit" Juan, is now a giant with 50 local franchisees and two foreign-based franchises in China and Dubai.

"Franchising in the Philippines is booming," said Affi president Richie Cuna. "More and more entrepreneurs and small- and medium-scale businesses are set to join the swelling ranks of franchisers under AFFI."

"In franchising, you sell a business model with a proven track record and the systems that go with it. The success rate for franchises is 65 percent, while the success rate for independents is 12 percent".

The growth in the number of small and medium-scale entrepreneurs and franchisees in the country is very significant because of their dynamism and creativity, which are vital for the development of Philippine business," said Cuna.

From having only three members when it was established 10 years ago in 1997 and 40 members in 2005, Affi now has ballooned to 85 regular members, which further branch out into a broad 1,000-strong network of businessmen, franchisors, franchisees and staffers.

This year marks 10 years of Affi and more new members are lined up to be part of this alliance of premier Filipino entrepreneurs.

The "Affi Franchise at 10" trade show is co-presented by Globe Telecoms; with sponsors like BPI Family Savings Bank and Planters Bank; donor sponsors Lots' A Pizza, Fiorgelato, Figaro, Reyes Haircutters, Binalot, Aquabest, The Tea Square and Fruitas and by Entrepreneur, Inquirer, Inquirer.net, Mr & Ms., DZMM, Business Mirror, The Manila Times, Franchise Today, Media Blitz, Dream FM and 101.9 as media partners. This is supported by the Department of Tourism.

For more details, interested parties may call the Affi secretariat/Tradecon at 633-8547; 633-4330 or 395-5009.

GLOBE TELECOM
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WORKS

JOHNSON & JOHNSON GARNERS 2 GOLD QUILL AWARDS

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) awarded Johnson & Johnson (Philippines) Inc with two Gold Quill Awards for its initiatives in celebration of the company's 50th anniversary in the country last year during the awards night held recently. The Gold Quill Awards Philippines program is conducted annually to celebrate the achievements of institutions in creatively and effectively communicating various projects that contribute to the progress of the local community. The 'Johnson & Johnson's 50th Year Commemorative Book: Committed to Caring' received a Gold Quill Award of Excellence. The special marketing promotion for Johnson's Baby Powder, 'Johnson's Baby Powder: 50th Anniversary Commemorative Tin Can' was conferred a Gold Quill Award of Merit. Shown (from left) are Rene Nieva, chair and CEO, Perceptions Inc, PR counsel to Johnson & Johnson Philippines; Elnora Abarrientos, executive director, World Vision; Luchi G. Maruhom, executive assistant to the managing director, Johnson & Johnson Philippines; Ruiz Salazar, human resource director, Johnson & Johnson Philippines/Asean Group of Consumer Companies; Jeffrey Stewart L. Go, marketing director, Johnson & Johnson Philippines; Tere Chong, group brand manager, Johnson & Johnson Philippines; Michelle Ramos, trade category manager, Johnson & Johnson Philippines; Danilo A. Macatangay, legal and external affairs director, Johnson & Johnson Philippines, and Nito Gatus, president and general manager, Priority One Corporate & Marketing Communications, holding up their Gold Quill Awards.

Scholarships for talented culinary students

AT-SUNRICE, THE RENOWNED SINgaporean culinary academy, announced recently two scholarships for its Post-Graduate Advanced Culinary Placement Diploma (ACP) for the July 2007 semester. Helen Bartholomew, founder of International Education Specialists of Makati, said that the scholarships were exclusively for students from the Philippines and were in response to the huge industry demands for culinary arts students from the Philippines.

Industry partners of at-sunrice like the Ritz Carlton, the Marriot, the Four Seasons, the Hilton (Singapore), the Hyatt, the Regent, the InterCon and other landmark hotels in Singapore have all highly praised the aspiring chefs from the Philippines who undertake internships at their hotels. Students are trained up to Chef de Partie standard by a rotation system of one month in-school instruction with at-sunrice followed by three months of industry training with an industry partner hotel for a period of two years. Every month they receive an apprenticeship allowance of S$750 for 24 months before launching their career worldwide.

At-sunrice is located in the beautiful Fort Canning right in the middle of Singapore and the school and spice garden is an integral part of the Singaporean culinary/social scene. As well as learning to become professional chefs, students at the school also create exciting social evenings for major corporations and embassies by introducing them to the art of using spices and oriental ingredients for a variety of exciting dishes.

The scholarships will be awarded to applicants who are college graduates (any discipline), 22 to 29 years old, have at least six months culinary experience either from college or industry, speak English fluently, and have a real passion for cuisine and a strong desire to become a GlobalChef. Initial contact should be made with International Education Specialists at 819-1001/02 or by e-mail on intl_edu_specialists@pldtdsl.net to set up a scholarship interview.

1st organic aloe vera juice drink in RP

FRUITS OF LIFE INC, THE MANUFACTURer of Lipa healthy beverages, introduces the first and only aloe vera juice drink in the Philippines-the Organic Aloe Vera Juice Drink, the natural way to lose weight.

Among the pool of fad diets, diet pills and other health products that promise to be aids for weight reduction, most have proven to be ineffective since 9 out of 10 people who tried them confess that once they resumed their normal eating habits, the scale went back up.

Organic Aloe Vera juice is an aid to achieve ideal weight. But unlike others, it is produced from either liquid or powdered aloe. Although it is recommended and advisable to buy juice made from the liquid extract, the fact that it is all natural is unquestionable.

This healthy, delicious aloe vera refresher is extracted from the plant's clear, glassy sap known as the aloe vera gel used to relieve ailments from insect bites, stings and sunburn to peptic ulcers, diarrhea and stiff, painful joints. It is also effective in soothing minor burns, cuts, scrapes and skin irritation.

It is further claimed that aloe vera gel cleanses the digestive system, ensuring a greater feeling of well-being. It also allows energy levels to increase while helping to maintain healthy skin while combating the effects of aging.

In its juice form, the Aloe Vera juice drink comes as an aromatic pandan juice which makes it deliciously healthy.

Organic Aloe Vera juice drink is now available at all leading supermarkets and specialty stores.

Iced tea cool party in Boracay

WHO WOULD EVER HAVE THOUGHT PARtying hard in Boracay can be easy as drinking a bottle of ice tea?

This much is true during the recently concluded "Beach Party'07" hosted by Sunkist Iced Tea, the newest tea drink in the market.

The much-anticipated first leg of beach soiree started by product sampling and sale right after lunch. By sundown, partyphiles and beach bums flocked the hip and happening Summer Place in Boracay to grind with the music of Dj Kimozave.

Remix of hip-hop music filled the place as guests drank to free-flowing Sunkist Iced Tea amidst loads of eye candies and unbeatable Boracay party vibes.

Even celebrity Beth Tamayo stopped to say hello. While at it, she answered some of the naughty "forbidden questions" thrown at her by the event host.

Guests were also introduced to Sunkist Iced Tea's new TVC themed "Honest Tea."

"The beach party in Summer Place Boracay is Sunkist's way of supporting its new media campaign," shares marketing manager Bien Umali, "Boracay is the best place to catch Sunkist Ice Tea's target market and summer is the best time to have a refreshing bottle of Sunkist Iced Tea. The party shows everyone how to have fun and at the same time, stay healthy."

Umali adds that Sunkist Iced Tea was launched to cater to the fast-growing trend of tea drinks in PET bottle packaging.

"RFM recognizes the Filipino youth's need for healthier and more convenient beverages. The rising trend provided an opportunity for the Sunkist brand to extend its current kid-based market and also cater to teens and young adults. It's also perfect for those who are always on the go. Aside from that, its refreshing fruit flavored tea drink offers just the right sweetness and zest which Sunkist lovers both young and old will surely love."

Introduced early this year by RFM Corp, the new handy and ultra sleek iced tea offers two refreshing variants: lemon iced tea and lemon green tea. It comes with a full-day supply of vitamin C and is also available in 320 ml and 500 ml.

"It's honest-to-goodness real iced tea-Sarap Honest!," Umali concludes.

THANK YOU, MOM!

Last May 13 at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, The Ulirang Ina and Ulirang Ama Foundation along with Coca-Cola as co-presentor, extended its recognition to 14 exceptional moms who keep homes and hearts warm all year round. Coca-Cola, with its new campaign 'Bonding sa buhay Coke buksan mo', recognizes the role of mothers in keeping the family spirit together as they bring the families back to the table and back to each other. May other mothers learn from the Ulirang Ina awardees and live by the examples that they have set.

Honda launches its 'clean' motorcycle

IN A SPECIAL EVENT THAT WAS HELD AT the Festival Supermall in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, May 25, Honda Philippines, the country's leading motorcycle manufacturer, launched its first ever Euro 2 compliant motorcycle model dubbed as "the cleanest motorcycle on the road".

The Euro standard is an internationally recognized grading system that measures the levels of carbon dioxide and other air pollutants that emit from motorcycles and other motor vehicles. Established by members of the European Union, it is grading scale from Euro1 to Euro5 that aims to ultimately reduce vehicle emissions to a minimum by year 2012. Currently, Hong Kong and Singapore are already imposing the Euro4 standard. Other countries like Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia and Indonesia are on the Euro 2 and 3 levels. Unfortunately, the Philippines has lagged behind in the race for cleaner air as it still is in the Euro1 level, with the official implementation of Euro2 still under discussion.

Despite this setback, Honda has forged ahead as it begins to convert all its motorcycles and upgrade them to conform to Euro2 standard way ahead of its competitors. Honda considers it its obligation to lead the way in environment protection, starting with the XRM125 which has been recently launched.

"As a responsible member of society whose task lies in the preservation of the global environment, Honda will make every effort to contribute to human health and the preservation of the global environment in each phase of its corporate activity. Only in this way will we be able to count on a successful future not only for our company, but for the entire world" Kazuhiko Ikezoe, Honda Philippines Inc president and general manager explained during his speech.

Honda's XRM is the company's biggest selling model, comprising nearly 20 percent of all motorcycles sold in the Philippines. The impact of such a popular model, made more environment friendly, is enormous. By the end of the current fiscal year, Honda hopes to upgrade all of its models to be Euro2 compliant.

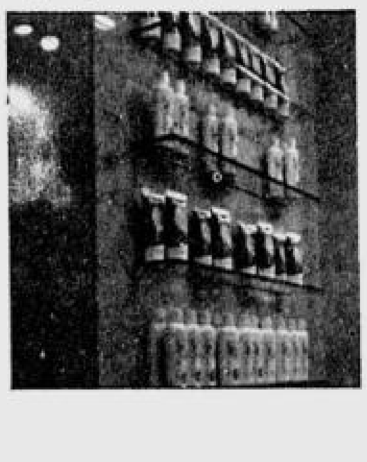
The new XRM 125 is a product of extensive market research, a clear response to Honda's customers' needs and preferences. Now equipped with a bigger 125 cc engine, the new XRM 125 will be faster, more powerful and more fuel efficient. Honda technology has created an engine that is not only more powerful but also emits less emissions, reduced enough to be Euro2 compliant-a first for Honda and a first for the entire local motorcycle industry.

The ultimate solution for baldness

MANY MALE INDIVIDUALS WHO WANT TO BE ADDRESSED AS "Metrosexuals of the 21st Century" may have experienced an alarming threat of hair loss which might lead to total baldness. Although not life threatening, hair loss definitely is a major factor for depression.

Brenen International Trading takes the big leap in producing the latest technology in revitalizing hair loss the natural way. Avacor Hair Re-growth Products are the ultimate answer for hair loss treatment, for both men and women alike.

Avacor treatment solution comes in a three-in-one pack composed of Scalp Detoxifying Shampoo-a deep cleansing shampoo to remove pollutants and residue from the scalp; Physicians Topical Formulation-a minoxidil-based treatment solution which promotes hair growth in as early as three months; and the All-Natural Nutricap Capsules-combination of herbal organic extracts which delivers nutrients to the hair follicles.



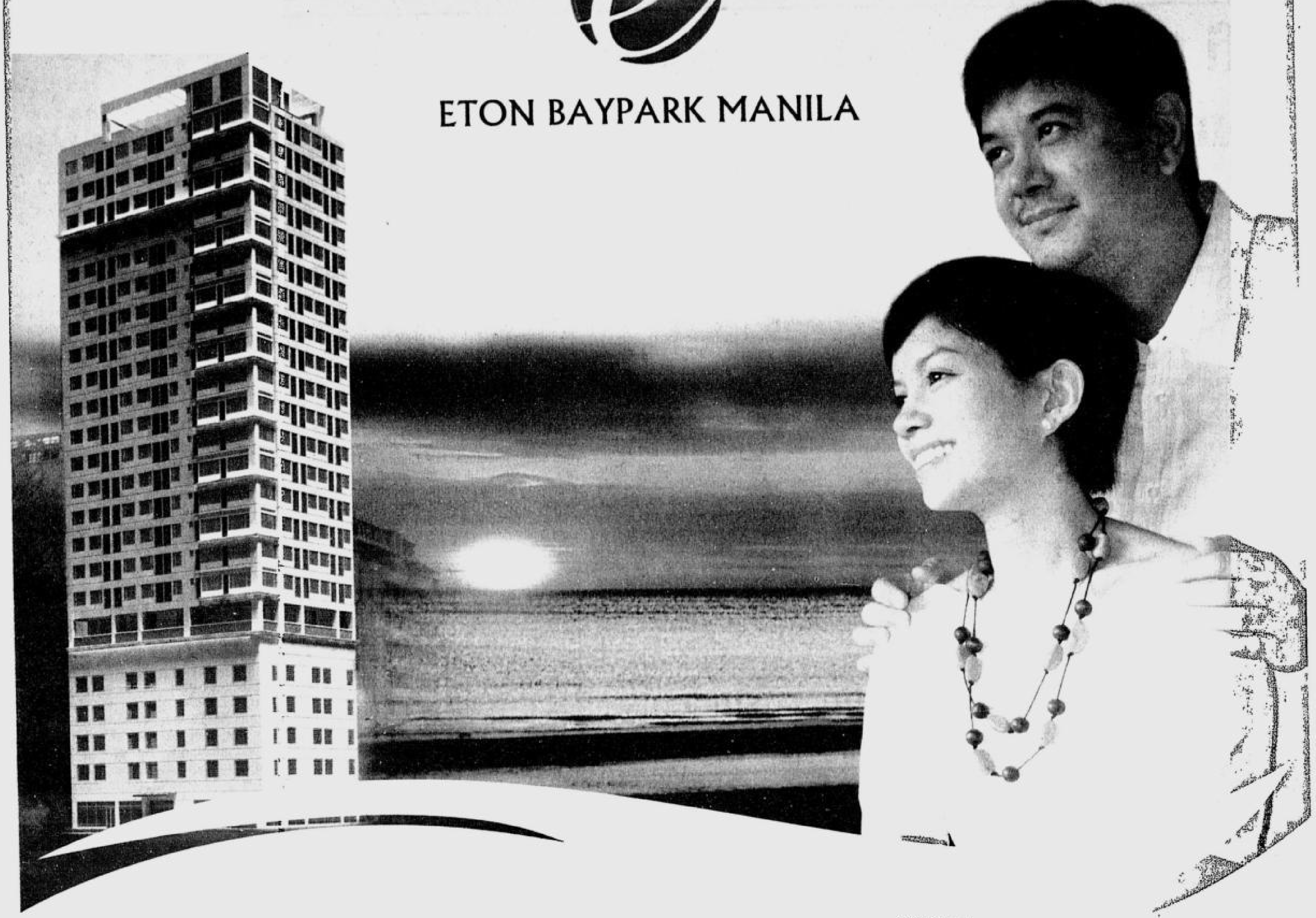
In a clinical study conducted by Dr. Gertrude Chan-a diplomate dermatologist of the Philippine Board of Dermatology, Avacor 3-in-1 pack was found to be effective in the improvement for baldness as early as four weeks and with continued usage, significant improvement was seen up to 11 weeks.

Chan also said that although it is time dependent, meaning it should be religiously applied as instructed, Avacor is proven to be effective with well-tested efficacy and safety.

For more information, call the Avacor hotline at 410-0844 or 0922-8282267. Visit its outlet at Rustan's Essenses in Makati. It is also available in Watson's outlets in SM Makati, Greenbelt 1, SM Megamall, and SM North Edsa. Rustan's Essenses in Alabang Town Center, Shangri-la Mall, and Gateway Mall.

Chevrolet vehicles display ongoing

FEAST YOUR EYES ON THE DASHING CHEVrolet Suburban, Tahoe, Optra Sedan and Wagon, and Aveo at the Chevrolet Vehicles Display ongoing until today only at the Mall of Asia, and avail yourself of discounts and promos!


ETON BAYPARK MANILA

Views truly majestic

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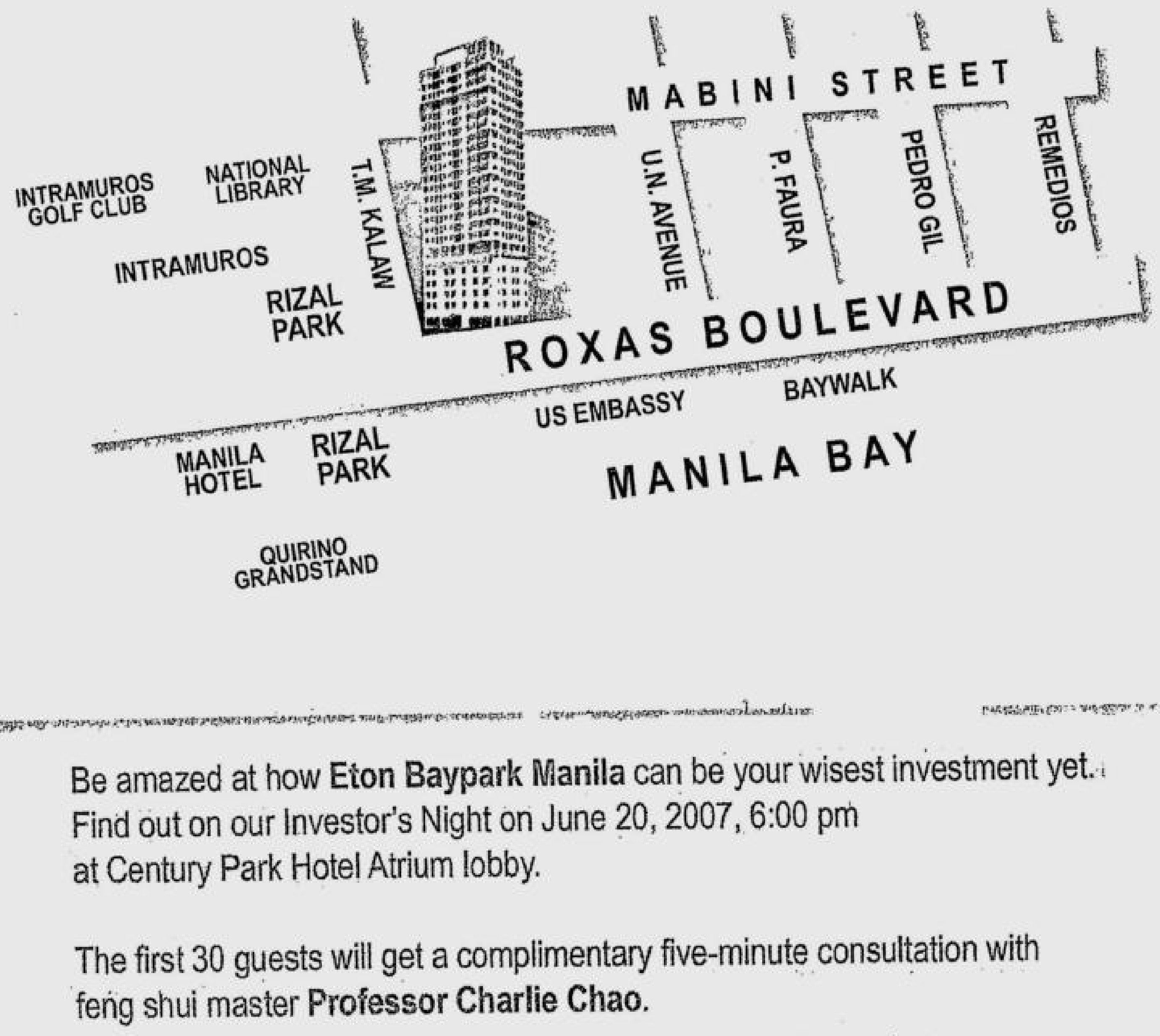
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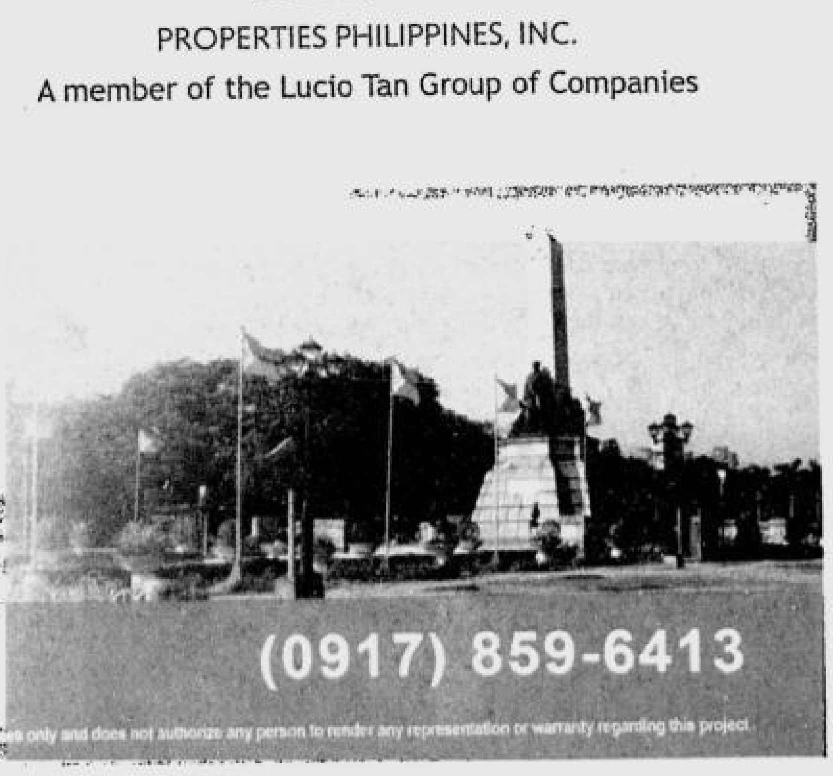
Find out on our Investor's Night on June 20, 2007, 6:00 pm
at Century Park Hotel Atrium lobby.

The first 30 guests will get a complimentary five-minute consultation with feng shui master **Professor Charlie Chao.**



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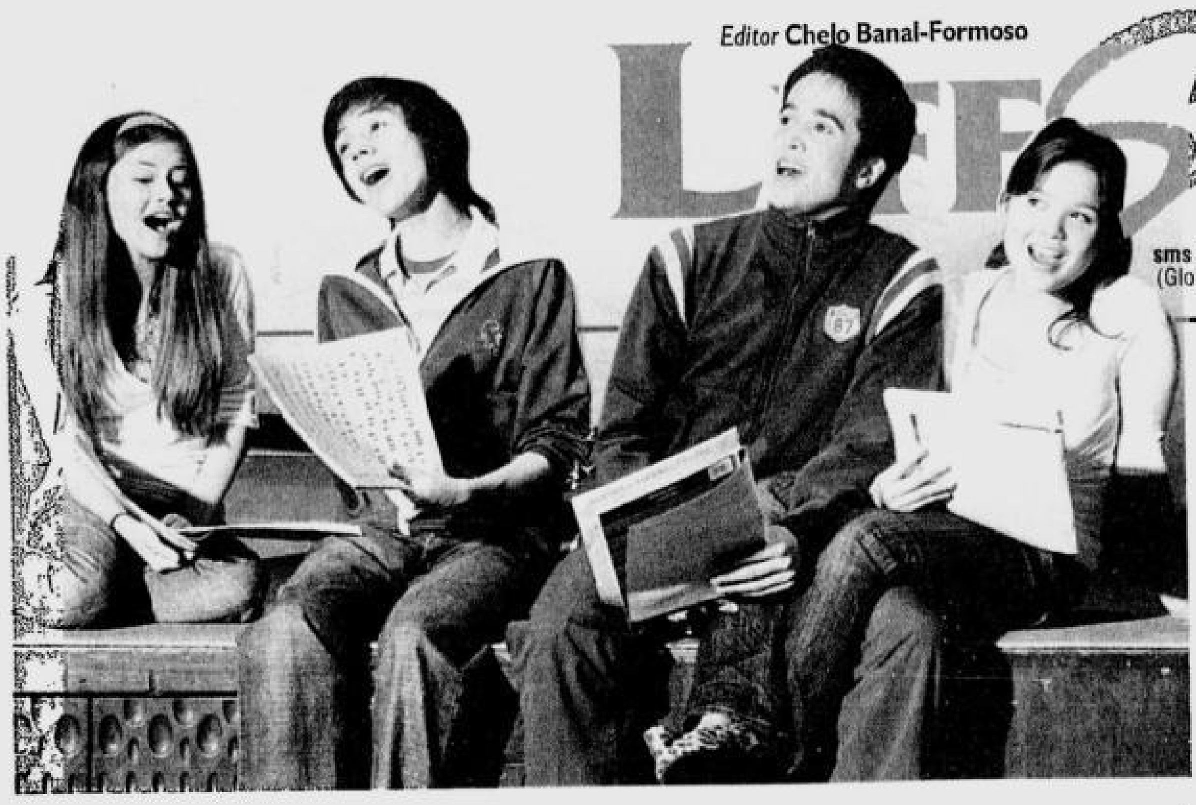

The Philippine staging of Disney's TV musical will offer new melodies, group songs and choreography

High on 'High School Musical'

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Monica Barretto

BEING BACKSTAGE on the set of the stage version of "High School Musical" is like being in well, high school again. The boys zip around in skateboards on the stage and play basketball in the corridors, while the girls hang out in their dressing rooms, play with makeup and take photos.

The difference is that someone occasionally breaks into song out

HIGH/ C3

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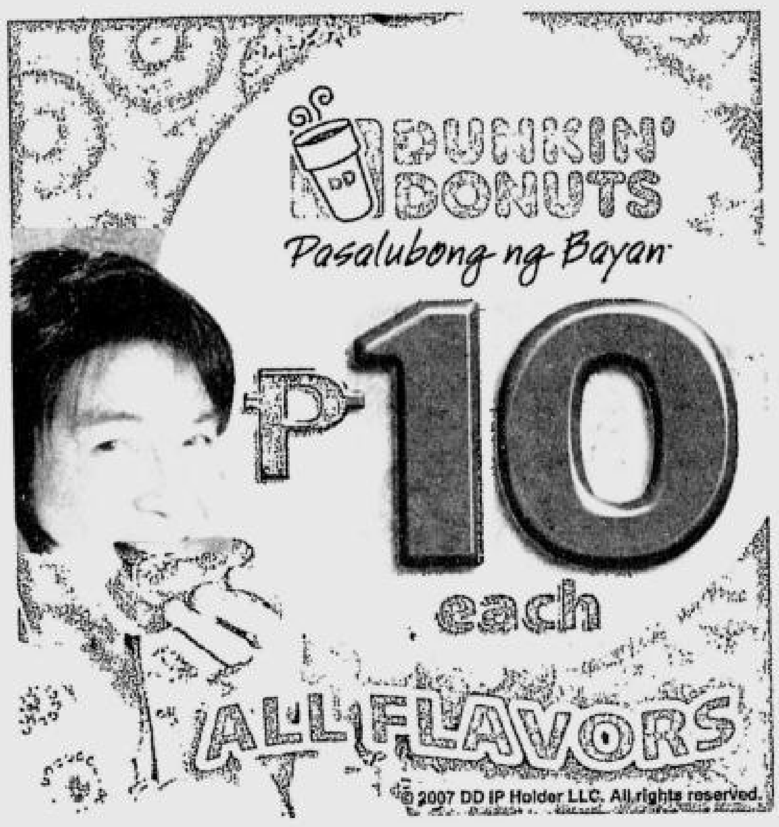

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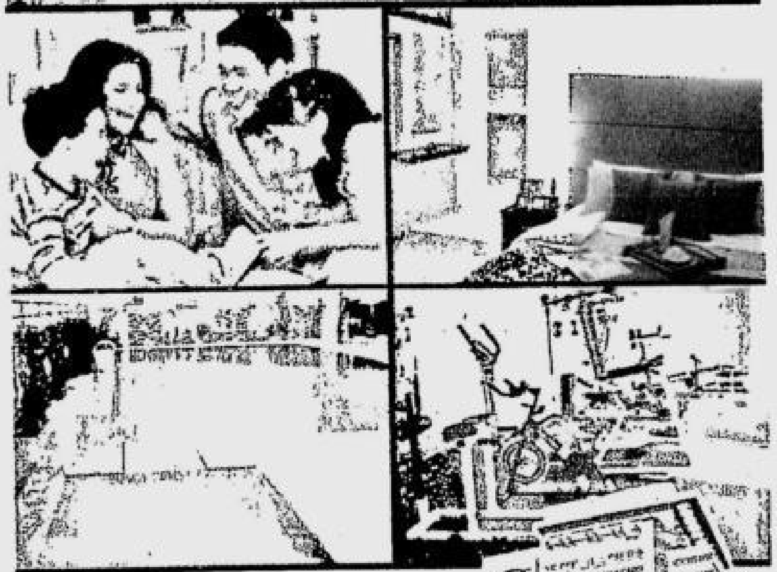

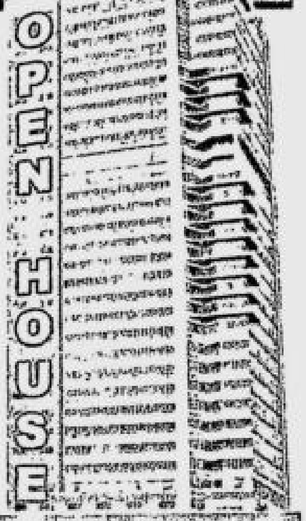

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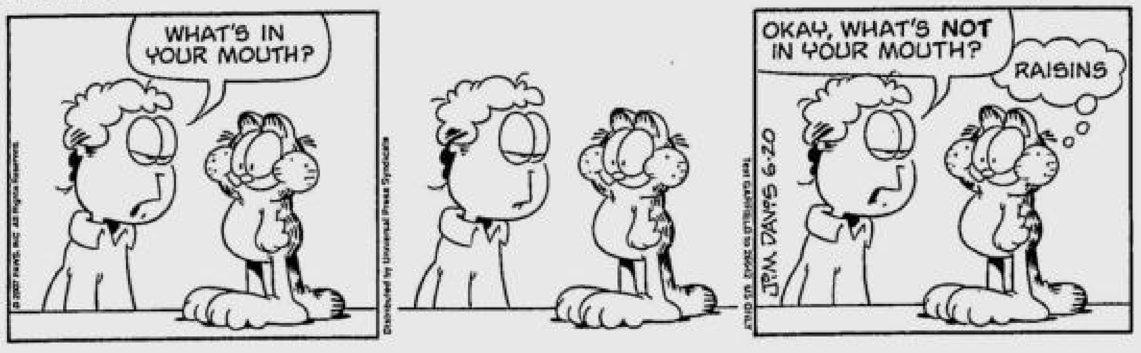
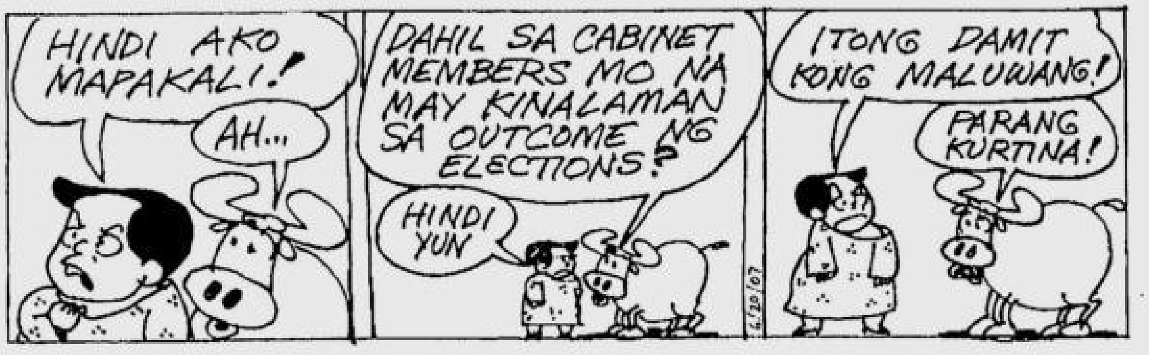
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


WHAT'S IN YOUR MOUTH?
OKAY, WHAT'S NOT IN YOUR MOUTH?
RAISINS
JIM DAVIS 6-20

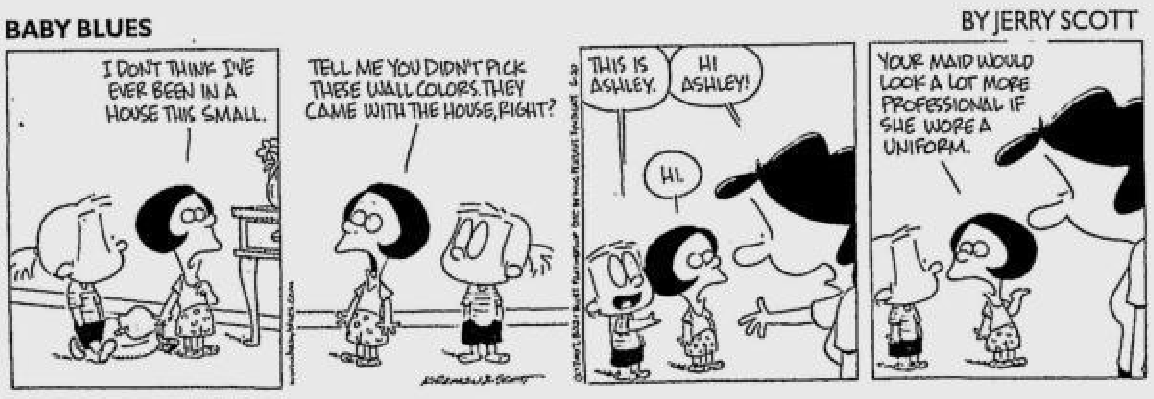
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI AKO MAPAKALI!
AH...
DAHIL SA CABINET MEMBERS MO NA MAY KINALAMAN SA OUTCOME NG ELECTIONS?
HINDI YUN
ITONG DAMIT KONG MALUWANG!
PARANG KURTINA!
6/20/07

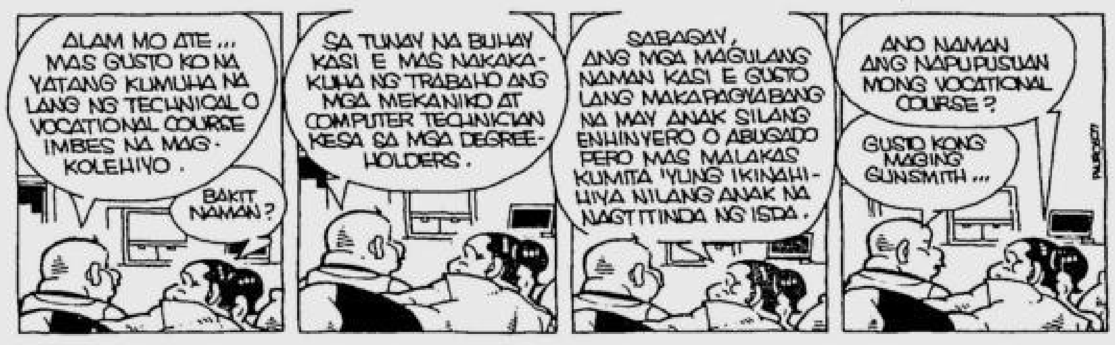
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN IN A HOUSE THIS SMALL.
TELL ME YOU DIDN'T PICK THESE WALL COLORS. THEY CAME WITH THE HOUSE, RIGHT?
THIS IS ASHLEY.
HI ASHLEY!
HI.
YOUR MAID WOULD LOOK A LOT MORE PROFESSIONAL IF SHE WORE A UNIFORM.

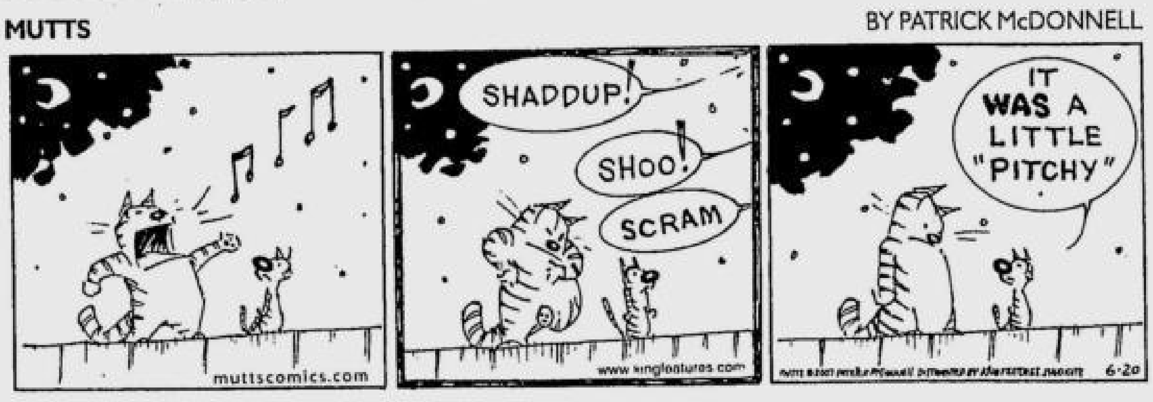
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO ATE ... MAS GUSTO KO NA YATANG KUMUHA NA LANG NG TECHNICAL O VOCATIONAL COURSE IMBES NA MAG-KOLEHIYO.
BAKIT NAMAN?
SA TUNAY NA BUHAY KASI E MAS NAKAKA-KUHA NG TRABAHO ANG MGA MEKANIKO AT COMPUTER TECHNICIAN KESA SA MGA DEGREE-HOLDERS.
SABAGAY, ANG MGA MAGULANG NAMAN KASI E GUSTO LANG MAKAPAGYABANG NA MAY ANAK SILANG ENHINYERO O ABUGADO PERO MAS MALAKAS KUMITA 'YUNG IKINAHI-HIYA NILANG ANAK NA NAGTITINDA NG ISDA.
ANO NAMAN ANG NAPUPUSUAN MONG VOCATIONAL COURSE?
GUSTO KONG MAGING GUNSMITH ...

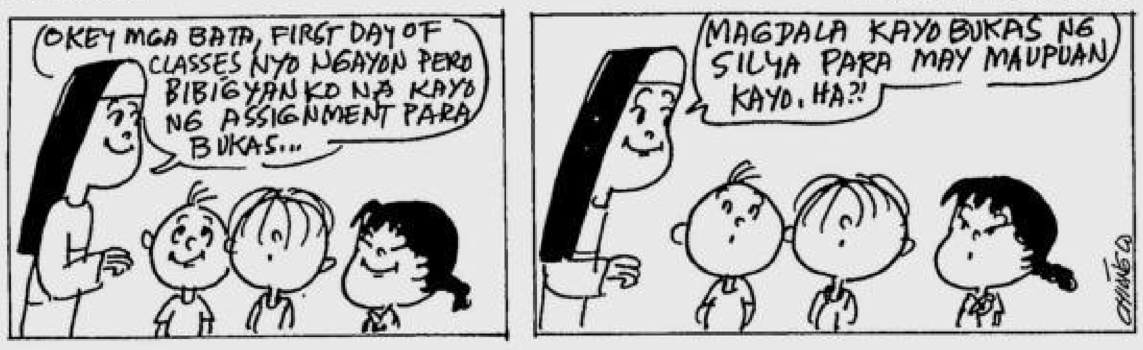
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHADDUP!
SHOO!
SCRAM
IT WAS A LITTLE "PITCHY"
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
6-20

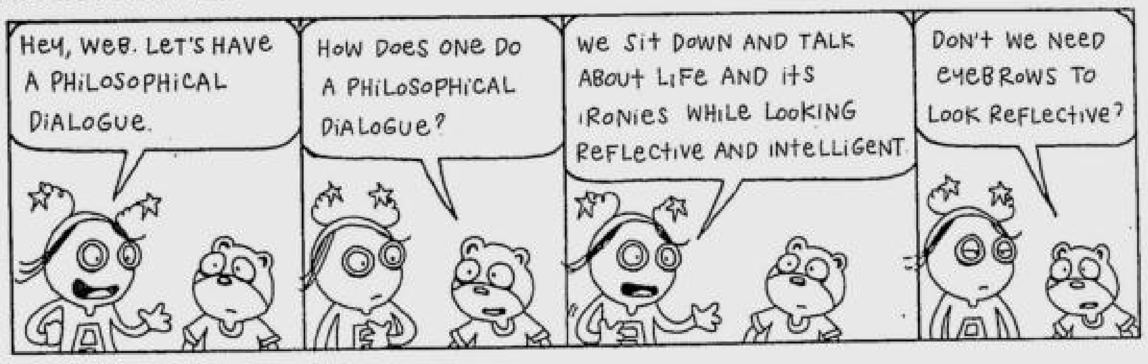
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


OKEY MGA BATA, FIRST DAY OF CLASSES NYO NGAYON PERO BIBIGYAN KO NA KAYO NG ASSIGNMENT PARA BUKAS...
MAGDALA KAYO BUKAS NG SILYA PARA MAY MAUPUAN KAYO, HA?!
CHIONGLO

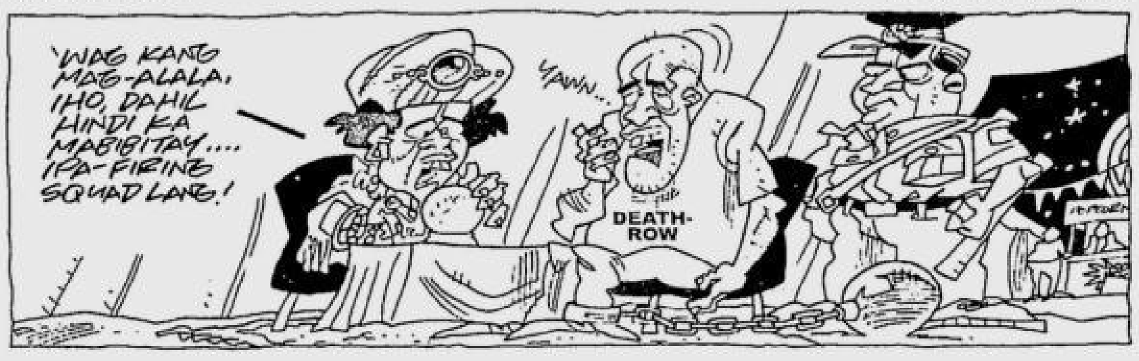
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WEB. LET'S HAVE A PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE.
HOW DOES ONE DO A PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE?
We Sit DOWN AND TALK About LIFE AND its IRONIES WHILE LOOKING REFLECTIVE AND INTELLIGENT
Don't We Need eyeBROWS TO Look Reflective?

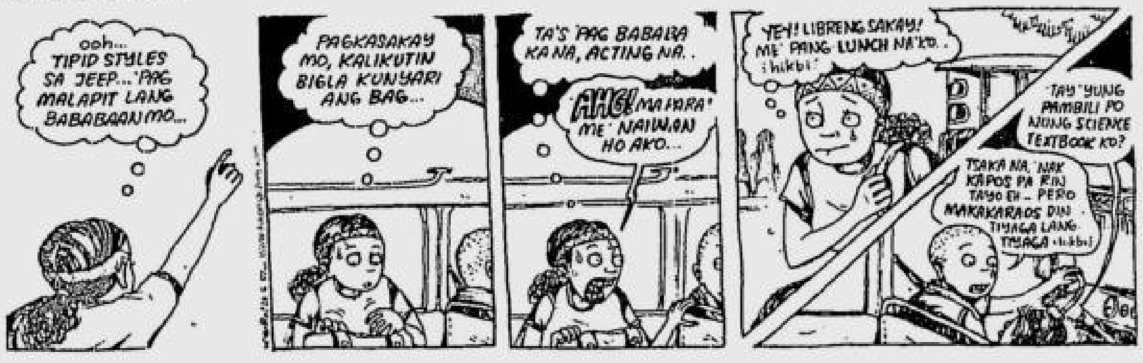
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


'WAG KANG MAG-ALALA, IHO, DAHIL HINDI KA MABIBITAY.... IPA-FIRING SQUAD LANG!
YAWN...
DEATH-ROW

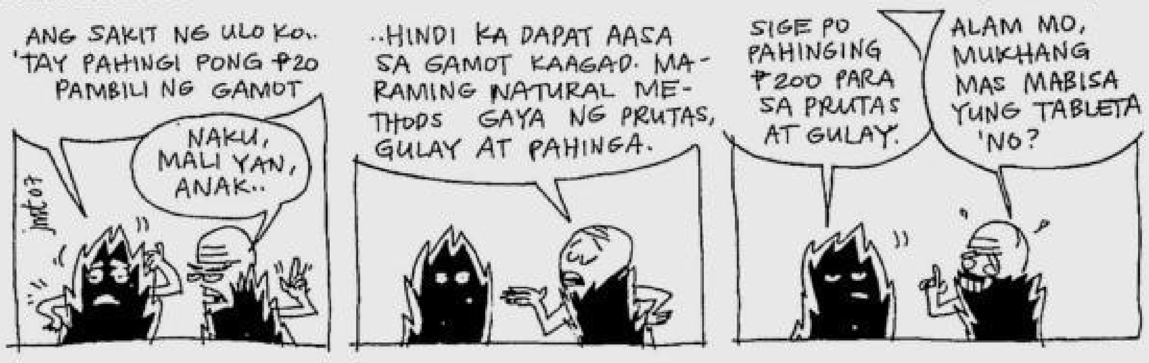
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ooh... TIPID STYLES SA JEEP...'PAG MALAPIT LANG BABABAAN MO...
PAGKASAKAY MO, KALIKUTIN BIGLA KUNYARI ANG BAG...
TA'S 'PAG BABABA KA NA, ACTING NA..
AHG! MA PARA! ME' NAIWAN HO AKO...
YEY! LIBRENG SAKAY! ME' PANG LUNCH NA'KO.. ;hikbi;
TAY 'YUNG PAMBILI PO NUNG SCIENCE TEXTBOOK KO?
TSAKA NA, 'NAK KAPOS PA RIN TAYO EH - PERO MAKAKARAOS DIN TIYAGA LANG TIYAGA ;hikbi;

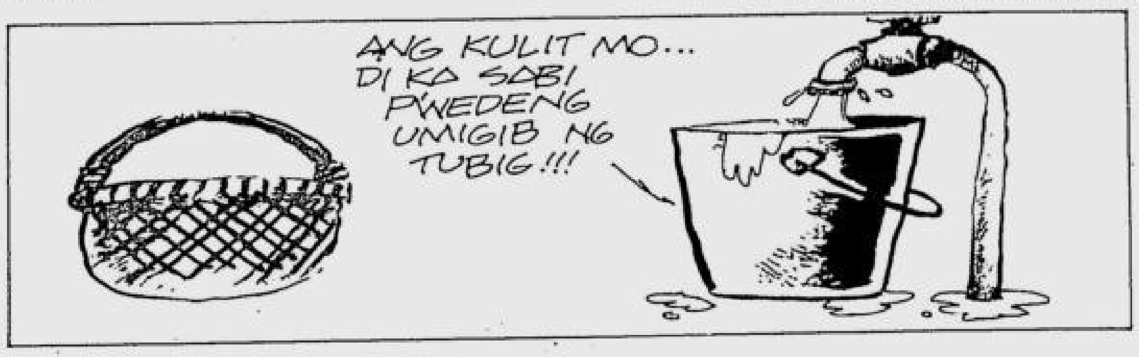
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG SAKIT NG ULO KO.. 'TAY PAHINGI PONG ₱20 PAMBILI NG GAMOT
NAKU, MALI YAN, ANAK..
..HINDI KA DAPAT AASA SA GAMOT KAAGAD. MARAMING NATURAL METHODS GAYA NG PRUTAS, GULAY AT PAHINGA.
SIGE PO PAHINGING ₱200 PARA SA PRUTAS AT GULAY.
ALAM MO, MUKHANG MAS MABISA YUNG TABLETA 'NO?
jmkt 07

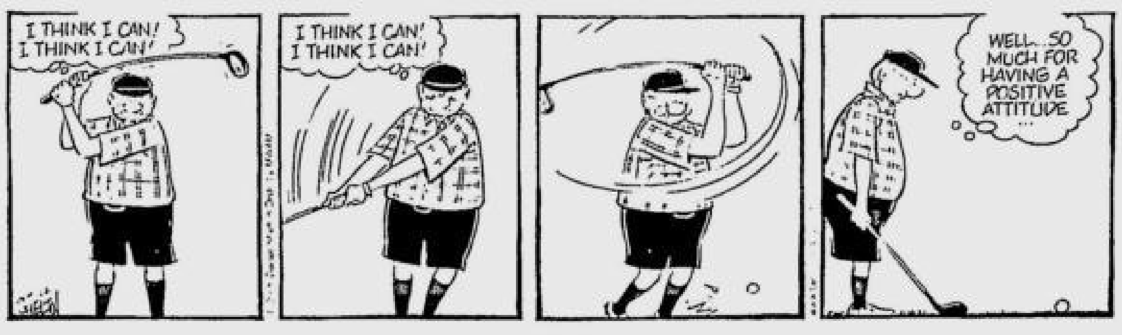
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG KULIT MO... DI KO SABI P'WEDENG UMIGIB NG TUBIG!!!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I THINK I CAN! I THINK I CAN!
I THINK I CAN! I THINK I CAN!
WELL... SO MUCH FOR HAVING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE...

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Gum lump
4 Correct text
9 Bacon unit
14 Gobbled up
15 Page number
16 Unfettered
17 Pessimistic sign in a department store?
20 Anvil in the ear
21 Wooden peg
22 Twixt 12 and 20
23 Syrup sources
26 Greek letter
29 NASA orbiter
30 Braves catcher of the '60s
31 Fr. holy women
32 High nest
33 Roofing reeds
35 Pessimistic sign in a soda shop?
38 Public talks
39 Writer Zola
40 Antique shop's affectation
41 Hagar the Horrible's dog
42 Kiddie seat?
45 Geological time period
46 Out of the sun
48 Sitarist Shankar
49 Some choir voices
51 Hammerin' Hank
52 Pessimistic sign in an IRS office?
57 Window sticker
58 Chart prop
59 __ volente (God willing)
60 Cara or Castle
61 Josiah's bone china
62 Bonus NFL periods

DOWN
1 Elk
2 Makes amends
3 Removes frost
4 Young newts
5 Pasture call
6 Reindeer tender, maybe
7 Diarist Anais
8 Scribble
9 Oodles and oodles
10 Handy bag
11 Wheel of fortune?
12 Leb. neighbor
13 Farm enclosure
18 Sister
19 Lobster eggs
23 Social conventions
24 Operatic song
25 Make believe
27 Gumshoes
28 End of a cigar
30 Time in office
31 Japanese drink
32 Fever and shivers
33 A-Rod's base
34 Sentry's command
35 __ contendere
36 Military materiel
37 Hook's mate
38 Enemy
41 Gives lip to
42 City on the Rio Grande
43 Bird with a bent bill
44 Spotted horses
46 Flair
47 __ polloi
48 Brit rule in East
50 Tilt
51 Up to the task
52 1501
53 Opposite of 'neath
54 Short snooze
55 Bear: Sp.
56 U.K. ref. books

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11	12	13
14			■	15					■	16				
17			18						19					
20					■	■	■	21					■	■
22				■	23	24	25				■	26	27	28
29			■	30					■	■	31			
■	■	■	32					■	33	34				
■	35	36						37						■
38						■	39					■	■	■
40				■	■	41					■	42	43	44
45			■	46	47					■	48			
■	■	49	50				■	■	■	51				
52	53						54	55	56					
57					■	58					■	59		
60					■	61					■	62		

By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
6/20/07

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

P	A	L	S	■	M	A	T	H	■	A	T	T	A	R
A	R	E	A	■	O	L	I	O	■	P	A	R	R	Y
S	O	N	G	■	L	I	E	U	■	P	L	U	M	E
S	U	G	A	R	A	N	D	S	P	I	C	E	■	■
E	S	T	■	O	R	E	■	E	R	A	■	L	O	P
R	E	H	A	B	■	S	A	T	I	N	■	O	D	E
■	■	■	B	O	G	■	D	O	C	■	A	V	O	W
■	S	A	L	T	A	N	D	P	E	P	P	E	R	■
S	A	M	E	■	L	E	E	■	D	U	E	■	■	■
O	R	B	■	S	E	A	R	S	■	T	S	A	R	S
S	I	R	■	A	N	T	■	A	P	O	■	N	E	T
■	■	O	I	L	A	N	D	V	I	N	E	G	A	R
P	E	S	T	O	■	E	R	I	E	■	D	O	L	E
A	L	I	E	N	■	S	O	O	T	■	A	R	T	S
S	L	A	M	S	■	S	P	R	Y	■	M	A	Y	S

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6/20/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're excitable, emotional and enthusiastic about life. People love to be in your presence because you energize them. You often make decisions based on your feelings rather than your logic because that's just your style. In the year ahead, your power is strong. It could be one of the best years of your life. Go after whatever you want. **Birthdate of:** Nicole Kidman, actress; John Goodman, actor; Brian Wilson, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Make a to-do list, and see how much you can accomplish today. It's a good day to run errands and catch up on little things, which will help you feel better organized.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is an excellent day for working with young people or children. It also promotes your interest in the arts, sporting activities and planning vacations or fun-social occasions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might be tempted to go overboard with family discussions or in doing something at home. Just don't promise more than you can deliver. Be realistic

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Conversations with others are upbeat and positive today. But somebody is exaggerating about something. Could this somebody be you? (No worries.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Keep track of your cash flow today. When shopping, keep your receipts. You might want to return something because you're tempted to be excessive in some way, especially late in the day

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Moon is in your sign today, making a lovely aspect to talkative Mercury. Conversations with others will flow smoothly and be productive in a pleasant way. Enjoy your day!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Research in any area will be productive today. You won't overlook details. Old information about bosses or parents could come to light.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A friend or acquaintance (probably a female) has something to tell you today. Or possibly vice versa. Be attentive and sympathetic, but be careful of promises you make.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Others will notice you at some point today. Discussions with bosses, parents and teachers could be significant. Straighten out fuzzy or confusing points.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Try to do something different today. Vary your usual routine. Satisfy your urge to learn something new or experience some excitement and stimulation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a good day to take care of bills, insurance matters, taxes, wills and inheritances. Try to get some of these red-tape details out of the way.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a productive day for your sign. You're in the mood to work, and you don't mind doing routine, rote tasks. You just want to get the job done. (And you'll be good with details.)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		9	6	4	1	5		
	2						8	
7				8				3
1				7				5
6	9			2	3	8		4
4								2
9								8
	1			9			5	
		8	4	6	7	3		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 6/20

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	8	7	3	6	5	2	9	1
9	3	5	8	1	2	6	7	4
6	2	1	9	7	4	3	5	8
7	5	9	4	3	8	1	2	6
3	4	2	6	5	1	7	8	9
8	1	6	7	2	9	4	3	5
2	9	4	1	8	3	5	6	7
1	7	3	5	9	6	8	4	2
5	6	8	2	4	7	9	1	3

Difficulty Level ★★

CHESKA Ortega and Sam Concepcion, who play Gabriella Montez and Troy Bolton, goof around during rehearsals.

PRACTICING a dance number

High on 'High School Musical'

From page C1

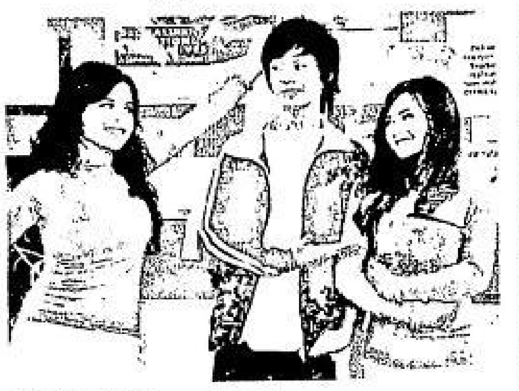
of the blue, and people back the singer up, making you feel like you've somehow found yourself in a Disney movie, where characters talk to each other by singing.

Stages' and Trumpets Playshop's production of "High School Musical," based on the Disney TV movie of the same title, is about a group of high school students who want to break out of their usual stereotypes—to "change the status quo"—and join a play.

"Little Big Star" grand prize winner Sam Concepcion takes the leading role of Troy Bolton, and is joined by Cheska Ortega as Gabriella Montez, Alex Godinez as Sharpay Evans, PJ Valerio as Ryan Evans, Jeff Arcilla as Coach Bolton, and Sheila Francisco as Mrs. Darbus. The dances were choreographed by Chinnie Nepumuceno and Alfred Luason, while Mio Infante did the set design.

According to Stages president and "High School Musical" director Audie Gemora, Concepcion and Ortega were his first—and probably only—choices to take the leading roles. "We see Sam in the role of Troy," said Gemora. "This is the perfect project for him. He is also really a theater boy, so we want people to see him beyond pop and television shows."

Gemora added, "Stages is very much into youth theater. We want to bring in new theatergoers and let them experience live musical performances, and we feel that 'High School Musical' is a good place for them to start, considering the success of the original television show."



THE YOUNG, perky cast

CHESKA and Alex get glammed up

The Philippine staging of "High School Musical" will bring fans much more than they expect; aside from the familiar, catchy songs found in the TV movie, the theater production will also include new songs with more group songs and choreography.

Concepcion said, "Rehearsals are crazy and tiring, but fun. I'm glad to be doing this because I grew up on the stage, doing theater. It's different from being on television because in theater, you really get to tell a story. You're unfolding it for the audience."

He added, "And the best part of it is that it's live, so no performance will ever be the same. That's how it's different from the TV movie... there's excitement in every performance, because you never know what will happen."

WITH Sheila Franciso as Mrs. Darbus, the drama teacher

SEVE Ching hams it up as Chad Danforth

"The best part of doing the play is that we [Trumpets] Playshoppers get to work together; it's sort of a reunion now that we're all in our teens," Ortega said.

The light camaraderie among the young cast (all of them are aged 14-20, with most of them coming from the Trumpets Playshop) was obvious during rehearsals. In between memorizing their lines, practicing dance moves and the aforementioned sudden breaking into song, the cast hangs out, sharing fast food and jokes.

"We're really excited about the show," Concepcion said. With such a young, talented cast behind the much-anticipated play, who wouldn't be?

PJ Valerio and Alex Godinez as Ryan and Sharpay Evans

'High School Musical' will be onstage at the Meralco theater on June 23, 24, and 30, and July 7, 8, 14, and 15. For tickets, call Ticketworld at 891-9999 or Stages at 818-1111 loc 209 or 225.

Email the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

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P5,990
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- High quality printing at up to 36 ppm black and 35 ppm colour (draft)

HP OFFICEJET PRO K850
P17,690
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- High quality printing at up to 24 ppm black and 21 ppm colour (draft)
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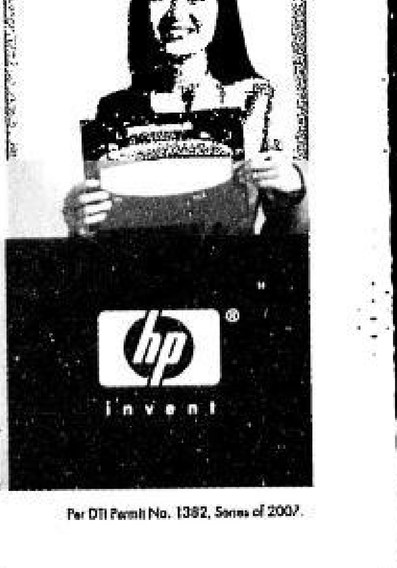

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EVERY NOW AND THEN

Right on the Mark

Every now and then, a real talent comes along. And Mark Bautista is it

By Arlene Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

IT TAKES MORE THAN JUST voice, looks and talent to create a mark in the music industry; one needs to be a fiery, passionate dreamer with a serious sense of discipline to be a truly remarkable performer.

In his "reMARKable" concert last May 31 at Club O (formerly Dish) at the ABS-CBN Compound in Quezon City, Mark Bautista took his audience on a little journey down memory lane, singing covers of 1980's hits from his latest album entitled "Every Now and Then."

"Every Now and Then," Mark's third album from Viva Records, contains 12 tracks—all of which are Mark's favorite English and OPM hits from the 1980s, including the carrier single, a remake of Angela Bofill's "Break It To Me Gently," which was re-arranged by Mon Faustino.

"This is my most favorite album so far *kasi* personal favorites *ko 'yung* songs, *at saka ang ganda ng* arrangement *ng bawat kanta*," Mark said.

The other songs in the album are "Every Now and Then," "These Dreams," "Got to Let You Know," "Naaalala Ka," "Kasalanan Ko Ba?" "I Don't Want You to Go," "Hold On," "I'll Be Over You," "It's All Behind Us Now," "Special Memory" and "See You There."

Eloisa Matias produced all the tracks except for the carrier single, which was produced by Mon Faustino.

Aside from his third album, the most recent milestone in Mark's career is becoming the new image model of Le Froge. Mark said, "Even before Le Froge sponsored my clothing, *ganu'ng* style *na talaga ang* preferred *ko. 'Yung hindi lang panlakad, nagagamit ko pa talaga sa* shows *ko*. Stylish at edgy ang Le Froge *kaya* it gives me even more confidence on stage."

Incidentally, Le Froge is one of the major sponsors of his "reMARKable" concert in Club O.

Mark is also included in "Paano Kita Iibigin," a light drama/romance movie co-produced by Star Cinema and Viva Films, starring Piolo Pascual and Regine Velasquez.

Piolo and Regine, who both came to watch Mark in his concert, wound up singing the movie's theme on stage after much prodding from the rest of the audience. Mark later on joked that the movie was a hit because he was there.

Humble beginnings

At Club O, Mark got a bit nostalgic as he shared with his audience his humble beginnings as a singer, recalling his own "boyband" gigs in small bars in his home province of Cagayan de Oro.

"*Dati, hindi kasing-ganda ng* Club O *mga kinakantahan ko*," he said, apparently still amazed at the cinematic turn of events in his life. After all, his mother had to ask a friend from a cargo ship to allow him to board for free to get to the weekly competition because they lacked the needed fare for the ride from Cagayan De Oro to Manila. Just a few months later, he emerged as Sarah Geronimo's runner-up in the grand finale of the now defunct "Star for a Night" on IBC 13.

The sexy heartthrob image that Mark is now known for is in stark contrast to the pale and thin young man that wowed the judges and the audience of "Star for a Night" five years ago.

Since Viva Records saw Mark's natural singing talent and raw passion for music, the studio took good care of him, and helped him all the way. Now, Mark is not just a singer, but a multimedia performer.

Soon enough, studio albums, TV shows, endorsements and movies came streaming toward Mark's way, along with several concerts across the world.

"*Hindi ako makapaniwala na ibe*-bless *ako ni* God *ng ganu'n*," Mark said. "*Nagpapasalamat ako sa Diyos at talagang iniingatan ko lahat ng binibigay Niya*."

Today, Mark has finished building a stylish home in Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City, with more than enough room for him and his family. Evidently, the trip from his hometown in Cagayan de Oro to Manila will never be a problem again.

On June 21, Mark will be leaving for his second European tour with Sarah Geronimo. Another US tour will soon follow. Does Mark Bautista still wish for more?

"*Sa totoo lang, masaya na ko nu'ng nakapag*-release *ako ng* first album. *Pero kung ibibigay ni* Lord *ang isang* acting award someday, *tsaka isang* studio album *na* major hit *talaga, alam ko sobrang* happy *ko na nu'n*."

Asked about his lovelife, Mark smiled sweetly, and said, "I'm just hoping for the best." I'm sure that his loved ones, as well as his fan base here and abroad are all hoping for nothing but the best for this remarkable talent, too.

For more information on Mark Bautista, log on to www.markbautista.com.

E-mail the author at crypticmess@gmail.com

THE SEXY heartthrob image that Mark Bautista is now known for is in stark contrast to the thin young man that wowed the judges of "Star for a Night" five years ago.

There can only be one.

Only one number 1.
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that's the Philippine Daily Inquirer.
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Source: Nielsen Media Index 2007 Wave 1
Based on urban national yesterday broadsheet readers

THE TOP 3 teams to finish the 2007 AXN Amazing Mall Challenge, along with their prizes

FIRST placers Dennis Lopez and Roselyn Cabral

THIRD placers June Carlo Cruzate and Jason Macatantan

Amazing race for mallrats

SECOND placers Jean Pierre Mitchell Reniva and Li-An de Los Reyes

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

I HAVE ALWAYS wanted to be part of a reality game show. And while I think I'd be more useful in "Project Runway" or even "The Beauty and the Geek," AXN's "The Amazing Race Asia" is one show I've always wanted to join.

Never mind if I think I am physically unfit or unqualified. Never mind if my team would probably be the first to go.

When AXN decided to bring back the Amazing Mall Challenge due to popular demand, I tried my luck in two things: convincing chief of correspondents Pam Pastor to be my partner (the race venue is a mall and Pam is the best shopper I know), and getting one slot out of 30 to join the race. Having succeeded in both, it looked like good things were about to come.

Held at the SM Megamall last April 21, the AXN Amazing Mall Race gathered a hodgepodge of hopefuls—from shopaholics to buffed adrenaline junkies, from enthusiastic and athletic adventure-seekers to yuppies taking a break from work.

They all had their eyes set on that US$1,000 cash and other cool prizes.

In the first AXN Amazing Mall Challenge in Manila in 2005, the team of actor Epy Quizon and T3 editor Maya Perez beat 29 other teams for the US$1,000 cash prize and two mobile phones from Sun Cellular.

Just what did they have to do? The duo had to sell Sun Cellular's Daylight Simpack and 24/7 card to the public, find a hidden Samsung TVC from a pile at the Cineplex, win a game of air hockey against a marshall at Timezone, and create a pizza then eat it at Pizza Hut.

The most challenging task was a trip to Tiendesitas on C5 where a team member had to maneuver a *kalesa* once around the complex, then return on a motorcycle back to the Araneta Center.

This year, the race involved 16 checkpoints where the teams had to have their passports stamped. For the first five, teams were handed cards containing picture clues. Checkpoints six to 16 had puzzles, tasks and challenges to accomplish before earning a stamp.

RACING to slip on their ice skates

Challenges

The challenges included getting high scores in Timezone's Super Trivia, tying a complicated knot, collecting tags while riding a skateboard, and shooting hoops five times in 45 seconds.

I've never touched a basketball in my whole life but, after several tries, I was able to accomplish miraculously the shooting task, much to my surprise and my teammate's delight.

What I considered to be the hardest among the challenges involved Coke Light. We had to complete a puzzle (which was actually easy) then finish a can of Coke Light.

Since I do not like soda, I had a tough time finishing the whole can. It took me quite a while and when I finally drank the soda to the very last drop, I felt so weighed down that all I wanted to do was take a nap. But my partner and I had to dash off to the next checkpoint.

My favorite checkpoint was at the SM Megamall ice skating rink where a team member had to answer correctly a series of questions then skate to the other end of the rink to free his/her chained teammate.

Pam and I debated on who the savior should be. After comparing skating experiences—she has never skated on ice but she knows rollerblading while I don't do rollerblading but have tried ice skating once during a date when I fell flat on my face five times—we agreed she should do the saving.

So there I was on the other side of the rink, chained and patiently waiting for my savior. It took her longer than expected but I didn't mind—I had more time to catch my breath and recharge. I was even rather disappointed when she finally released me.

After all the running in the past couple of hours, standing still and taking deep and long breaths was actually nice.

My partner had her chance to rest in the Greenwich challenge. A member had to finish a meal consisting of spaghetti, chicken, bread stick and a cup of soda while the other had to deliver leaflets to three separate destinations in the mall.

Since I am on a very strict diet to get rid of the pregnant look, plus the challenge involved drinking soda again, I begged Pam to do the eating which she thankfully agreed to do.

I was on my way back to Greenwich after delivering the leaflets when I passed by the stage and saw several teams had already finished the race. When I got back to my partner, we agreed not to finish the last two legs of the race anymore. Why exhaust ourselves, right?

So, instead of sweating and running some more, we went to a coffee shop for some *tiramisu*, chitchat and a lot of rest.

Winners

When we went back to the stage, Brownman Revival, Drip and a capoeira group had finished wowing mall-goers with their performances.

Prizes had also been handed out. First-placers Dennis Lopez and Roselyn Cabral took home US$1,000 in cash and other prizes; second-placers Jean Pierre Mitchell Reniva and Li-An de Los Reyes, US$500 in cash and prizes; and third-placers June Carlo Cruzate and Jason Macatantan, US$300 in cash and prizes.

Pam and I might not have won, but we definitely became better people after the race—more street-wise and more confident about certain physical activities. Oh, and minus a couple of pounds too, I'm sure.

I learned there were still some things I was not ready to do

The AXN Amazing Mall Challenge made me realize a lot of things: that you should ask for directions when you are lost; that the directions you get may not be accurate all the time; and that a sissy, geeky person like me can have the capacity to shoot hoops and run for four hours straight without fainting.

The best lesson was I realized that there were still some things that I was just not ready to do, such as making soda a part of my life and joining "The Amazing Race Asia."

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

THE GREENWICH challenge required gorging on pizza under time constraints.

WHILE there were mental challenges, there were physical challenges as well.

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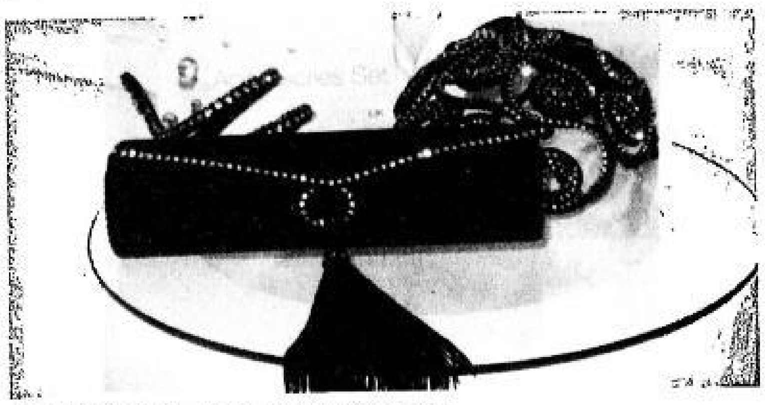
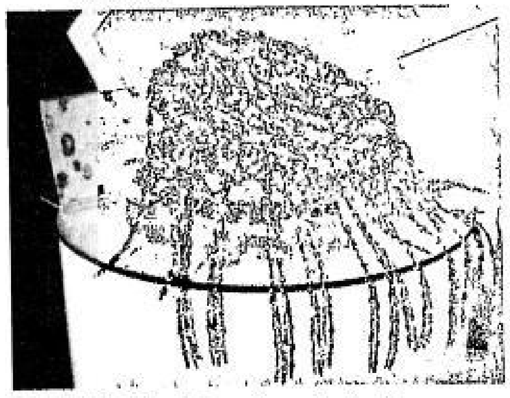
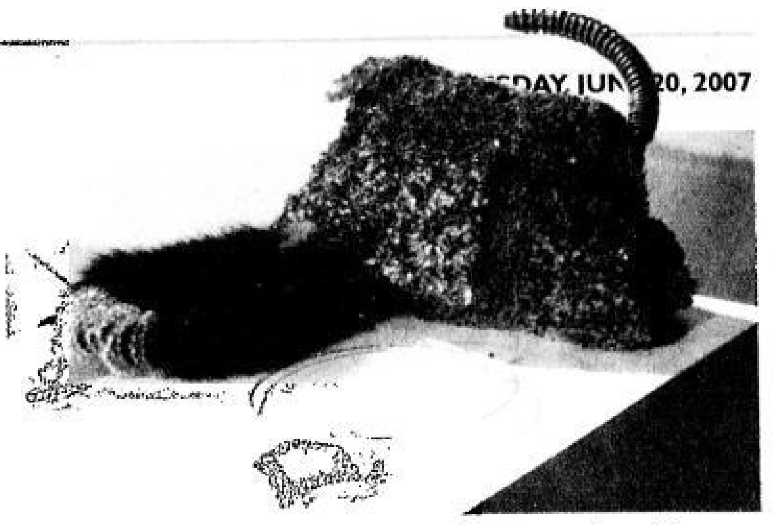


ACCESSORIES set from United Kingdom



TZARINA Headpiece from Australia

Swarovski crystals also foster individual creativity and expression



MINK necklace and pave necklace from Italy; bag patchwork from South Africa

Crystallize it!

By Leslie Ann Tan
2bU! Correspondent

SWAROVSKI HAS LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED with elegance and class. In its 112 years of history, with beginnings in the village of Wattens, Tyrol in Austria, Swarovski has grown to be the world's leading producer of precision-cut crystals. Today, these crystals form an important design element—used not only in fashion and jewelry, but also in lighting, architecture and interiors.

Since 2005, Swarovski has embarked on a global campaign launch through exhibits and workshops—Create your Style with Crystallized Swarovski Elements.

In Japan and Korea, famous for their strong cultures of hobbies and crafts, it is easy to understand Swarovski's popularity. But also in Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines, hobbies like jewelry-making are gaining ground.

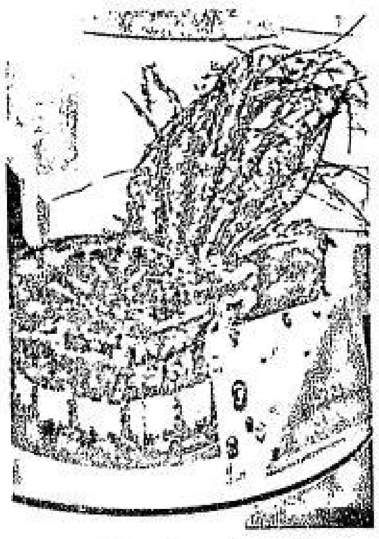
Leading with the concept of do-it-yourself, this initiative brings Swarovski right into the hands of creative individuals.

These crystals are no longer the exclusive territory of haute couturiers and fashion designers. Today, creative people can buy single beads and stones—elements, if you will—and create beautiful pieces as far as their imaginations go.

In fact, the not-so-creative ones can try their luck with designing too.

It is amazing how simple patterns, coupled with easy techniques of beading, stringing and tying can lead to individual expressions of personal style and taste.

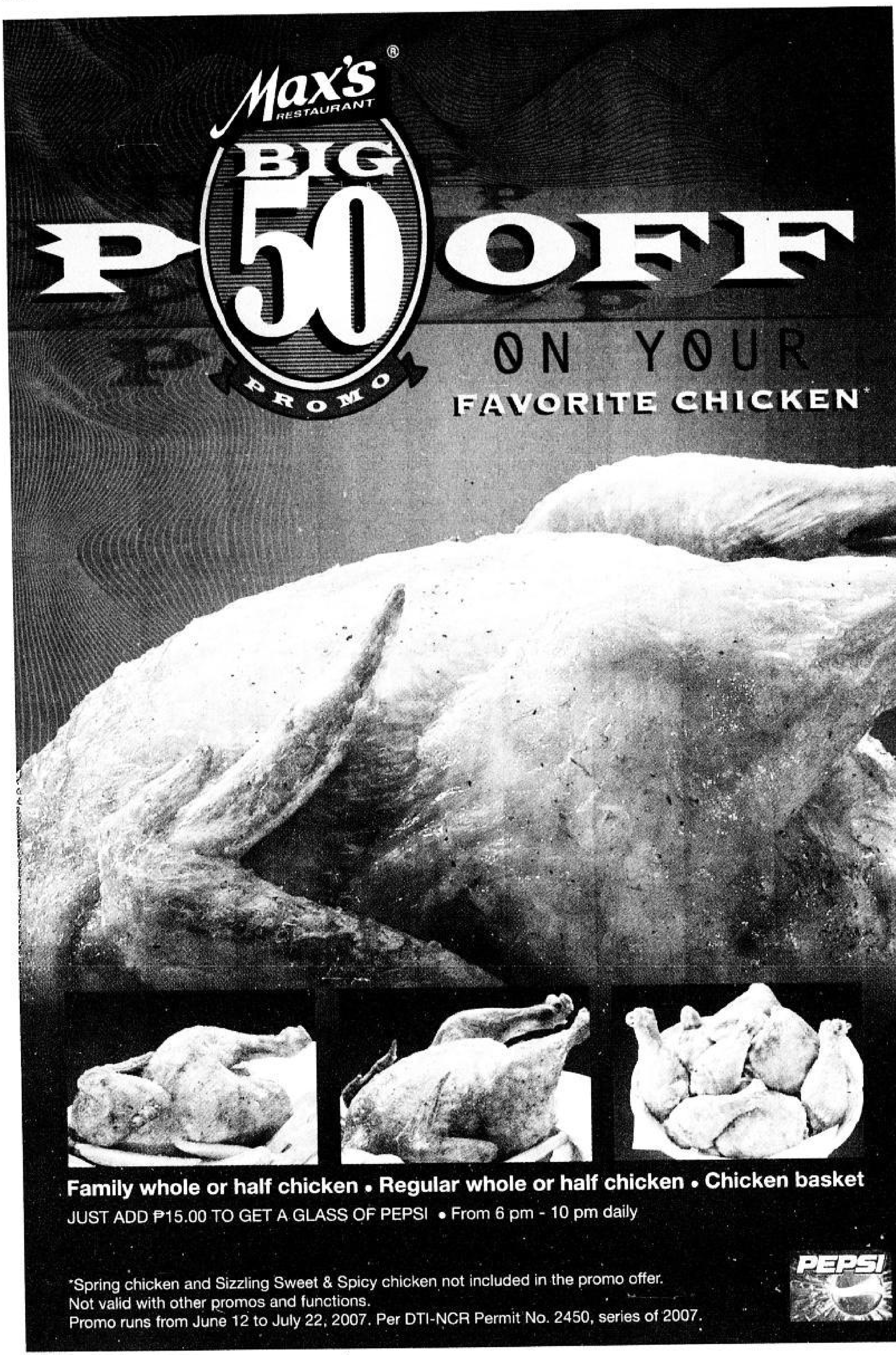
Visit www.create-your-style.com



PILLBOX hat from Australia

OLIVIER Camus, VP operations, North and Southeast Asia-Pacific, opens the workshop.

SHAWL from the United States



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Rockin' the radio

Rock Ed takes its social-studies class to the airwaves with Rock Ed Radio on NU107

By Pam Pastor

GANG BADOY'S IDEA OF creating a volunteer group that pushes alternative education through interesting events and projects has been a well-discussed one. She has referred to it as a social-studies class of sorts—but outside the classroom.

"Rock Ed is an alternative class where the substitute teachers are celebrities, musicians, poets, artists, entrepreneurs, writers. The conveners of Rock Ed decided to rock society through education and educate the youth through rock culture—via music, the arts, poetry, sports, photography, fashion, graphic design, literature, new approaches to science, film, cultural studies, theater, dance and any other way except being in a classroom," Gang said.

And the group, popularly known as Rock Ed, has taken this class to all kinds of places—from huge concert events and relief operations to jails and cleanup projects. Recently, this alternative social-studies class has invaded a new medium.

Rock Ed has taken over NU107's 8-9 p.m. slot on Sundays—devoting the time to discussions about important subjects—from the elections and music plagiarism to jails and sexuality. For over two months now, people have been getting their dose of alternative education on lazy Sundays while hanging out at home or while driving.

Hosted by Gang and Lourd de Veyra, the show is both entertaining and enlightening. Since topics are announced in advance—both on the radio and on the Rock Ed Radio blog, people participate in the discussions by leaving comments and questions for the guests on the blog or sending text messages during the show. An hour never feels enough.

Gang says teachers and students have been regular listeners of the show—and it's not surprising. Some social studies teachers have even made listening to the show part of their students' homework.

And people who missed listening to the show can read Gang's recaps which are normally posted on the blog the day after the show.

INQUIRER 2bU! has always supported Rock Ed's causes and the group's desire to educate and to end poverty in the country. I clocked in Rock Ed Radio time a couple of weeks back during their gay pride episode. The show, which tackled homosexuality and society *(See sidebar)* was eye-opening.

I was there to talk but I found myself just standing there, listening to what the other guests had to say. Danton Remoto and Aiza Seguerra were especially enlightening.

Soon, the desire to join the discussion became so strong—and I ended up revealing things you normally wouldn't talk about on air—especially when your mother is at home recording the whole thing.

But still, the whole experience was worth it. I learned, I listened, I shared. Gang is right, it was almost like a social-studies session—except it was a million times more fun. I wouldn't choose recess over this class.

Check out Rock Ed Radio on Nu107, Sundays, 8 p.m. or visit www.rockedradio.com.

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107
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RADIO HOSTS and more. Gang Badoy and Lourd De Veyra are teachers on the airwaves.

LOURD listens.

Gay pride on the air

If you missed it, no sweat. Here's a recap of Rock Ed Radio's gay-pride episode

By Gang Badoy
Contributor

ROCK ED RADIO EXPECTED A lot of fun that night. Even before the show started, the hosts and guests were already chatting up a storm. The NU107 booth had the atmosphere of a high-altitude party—minus beer or food or extraneous bland company. Definitely no small talk there.

We decided to talk about the surface of the iceberg topic called "Being Gay in the Philippines." We had an all-star cast: Danton Remoto, chair of the Ladlad Partylist (and a recent Congressional candidate) started the hour. He said that the times are kinder to the coming-out of gays because of many factors. Literature in the academe has ushered in the more open acceptance of what the general population describe as a "different sexual orientation."

Ramon Bautista of the University of the Philippines Film Department and yes, "The Ramon Bautista Show" on MTV, intently listened, as did Francis Brew.

Both Francis and Ramon represented the straight male tribe.

Bautista said that despite being straight all the way, he can appreciate who is good-looking and who isn't

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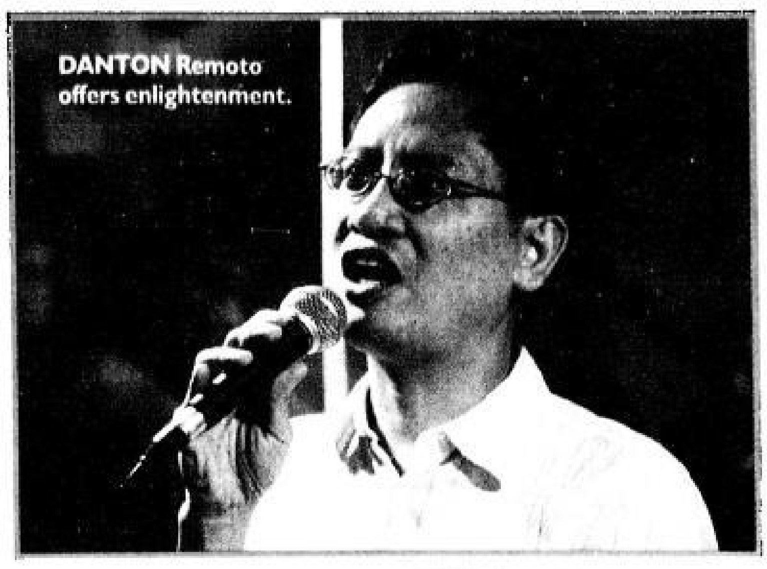
HOSTS and guests of Rock Ed Radio's gay-pride episode



DANTON Remoto offers enlightenment.

Gay pride on the air

From page D1

among men. He mentions John Lloyd Cruz as his example—but says that it doesn't mean he wants to date John Lloyd. Ramon is a media practitioner and a UP Film professor, his field sees a lot of gay participation and he says he doesn't mind this at all.

Little Miss Philippines, former child star, now musician Aiza Seguerra was candid and straightforward about her preference. She said she has known her gender identity even as a child in "Eat Bulaga." Aiza said: "If you have it, you have it," regardless of outside influences.

Seguerra said the most difficult part of coming out was disappointing the important people in her life, especially family. She said it takes a lot of courage to come out.

Seguerra spoke so steadily that it was hard to reconcile the image of her as the be-ribboned little girl doing the duck walk with her image now. She was full of wisdom.

Growing up in a family of five boys and having a military father, Shu Uemura's EJ Mallorca said he has been blessed. He doesn't have the horror stories of being ostracized or teased as a child. His brothers accepted him even without the "coming-out talk."

Tatum Ancheta is our wild card. She does art direction for People Asia. She is *kikay* and fashionable, but said she prefers women when it comes to relationships. She is certain about this despite having had relationships with men. She explained you fall in love with the person not the gender.

RAMON Bautista represents the open-minded straight male.

Acceptance

Pam Pastor is decidedly not so straight. She revels in her gay friends. She says she breaks up with guys who are homophobic. Pam struck us more as truly open-minded instead of confused (there's a big difference). She is also our source of advice when it comes to gay-straight friendships. She says she doesn't force anyone to come out even if she already knows one is gay. That's always the best course to take to avoid misunderstanding and a crossfire of intentions. Pam is my nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize on compassion for and acceptance of homosexuality.

EJ MALLORCA grew up gay in a military family.

Danton is all out. He has never liked women. He prefers strong, quiet men.

I think in both the hetero- and the homo methods of courtship and relationship management, the rules are the same. We fall in love with the people we fall in love with because they have traits that are attractive to us, they possess characteristics that complement, perhaps, our lives and our minds.

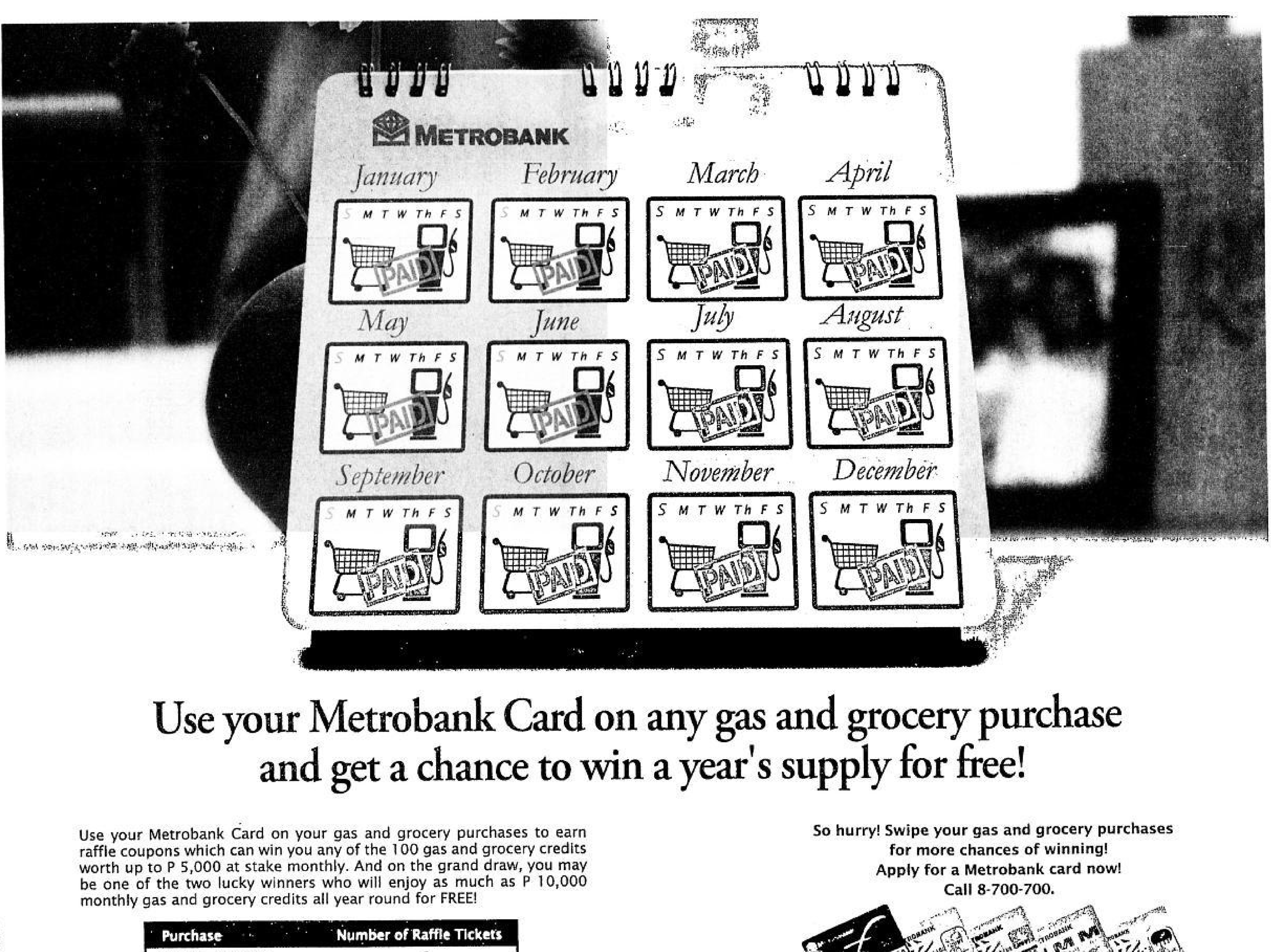
There were interesting comments from listeners. *"Ang* bisexual *ba ay segurista lang?"* and *"Ang* bisexual *ba bading din?"* and *"Ano ang tell*-tale signs *ng isang bading?"* It's a long list—one that only shows our fascination with the subject.

I think what the bigots and homophobes feel is true awe (maybe even envy and curiosity), and then because it's too much for their mediocre minds to handle it, the easiest manifestation is hate. Then again, I could be very wrong. Rock Ed Radio decided not to touch on the stands of any creed or faith following on this one, that might take up too much time and, perhaps, should be explored at another forum altogether. We went overtime as it was.

Allen Ginsberg, a beat poet from the '50s, born on June 3 1926, served as the inspiration of the show. Even in the ultra-conservative '40s, he was already open and brazen about discussing homosexuality—he continuously attempted to force the world into dialogue about controversial subjects because he thought no change could be made in a polite silence.

We wanted to talk about this and we did.

The world has its share of mysteries, but what is most puzzling for Rock Ed Radio is the narrow-mindedness of many even in this era of knowledge-based kindness, acceptance and wide-open mind-spaces.



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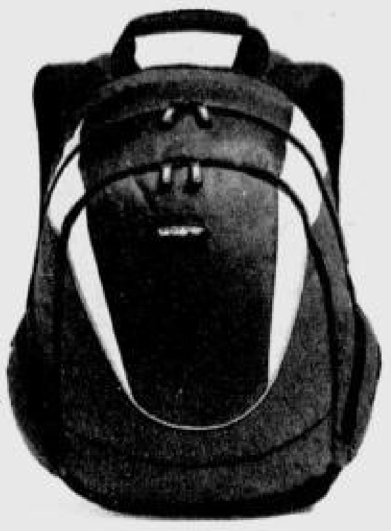
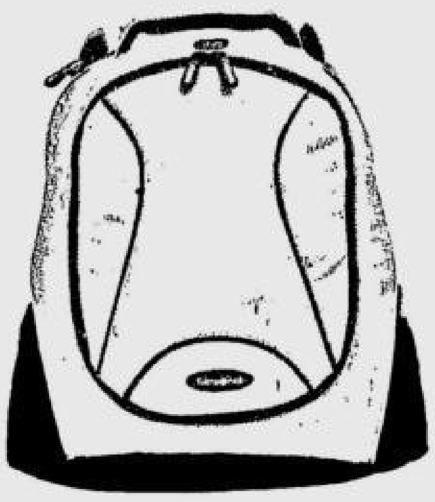


THE SWOOP Backpack with earphone slots, ergonomic straps, and bottle holder. In orange, pink, blue, and charcoal



THE CITY Laptop Messenger's Bag fits a 15.4-inch laptop and comes in orange, blue and charcoal.

Gear guide for students

THE QUAD Backpack features earphone slots, ergonomic straps, and bottle holder. In orange, blue, and charcoal

UNIVERSITY Laptop Backpack fits a 15.4-inch laptop and comes in orange, pink, blue, and charcoal.

SAMSONITE'S LATEST LIGHTWEIGHT BAGS and packs are a treat to students. With its new Outliners collection, there's always enough space and pockets so pens and notes never get lost.

For the style-wise school achiever, Outliners has heavy-duty, all-purpose bags with plenty of compartments and pockets for quick organization.

The collection also considers the student's gadget love as many backpacks feature laptop sleeves and detachable laptop holders.

There's also a small shoulder bag for digital cameras and MP3 players, while the bigger expandable bags with wheels assure that books and other school things can fit inside and be carried conveniently.

Co-eds with a fashionable outlook may prefer Samsonite's classically contoured City Lites backpacks. Exploring museums and doing library research become even more interesting with a soundtrack, courtesy of the music pocket with earphone slots.

The bags also have ergonomic straps, pockets for bottles and cellphones, key hangers, and reflective accents for extra visibility and safety.

Some City Lites bags have laptop compartments.

With vibrant colors and youthful designs, the sturdy yet lightweight and comfortable S+US collection is also a boost to studies.

The multipurpose backpacks and messenger bags are made of tear-resistant polyester. Many of the bags also have laptop compartments and earphone slots.

The new Samsonite bags are available at the Podium and Powerplant.

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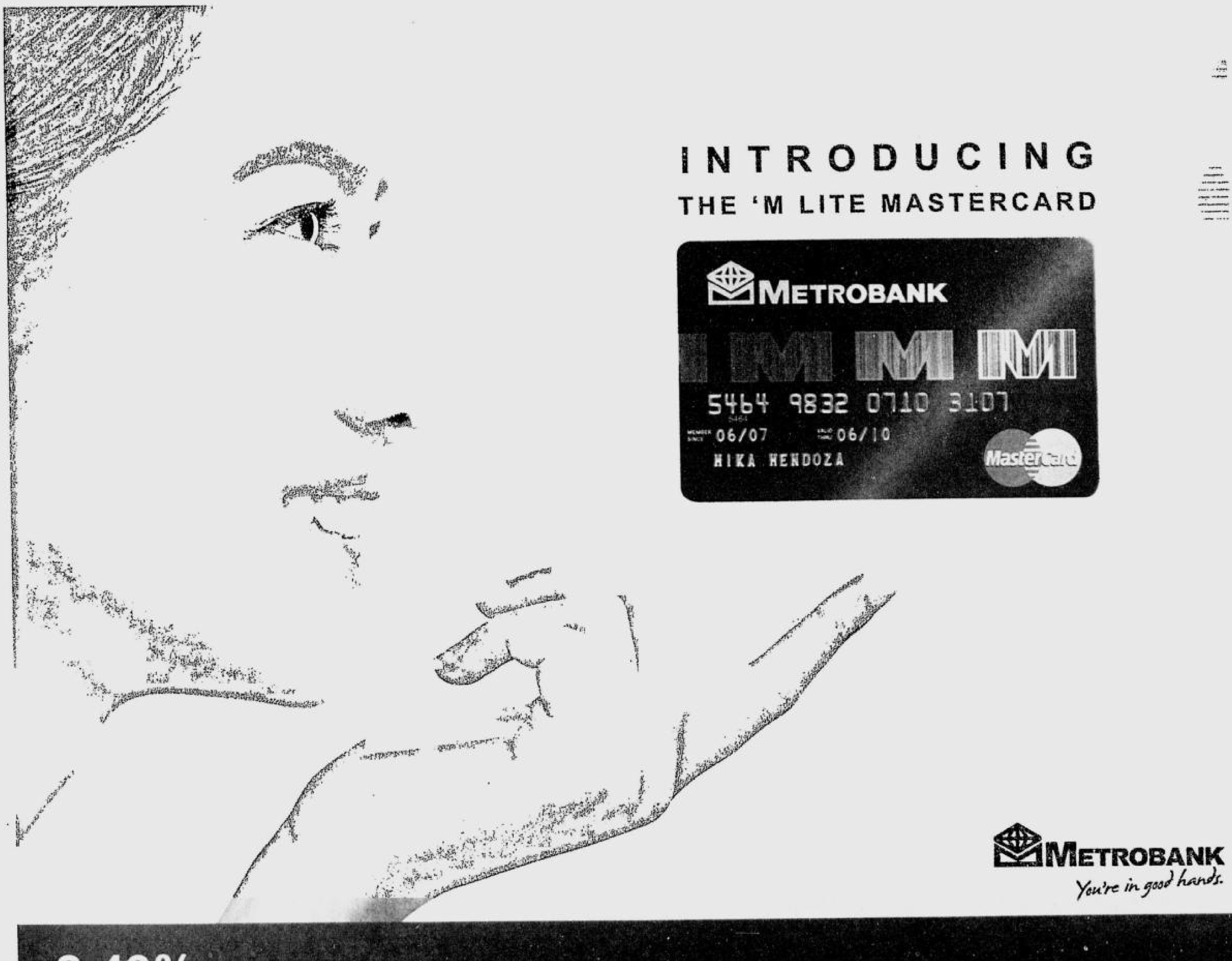

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2BU! FAN FILES

Pinoy Big Fan

By Giles Ivan A. Aquino
2bU Correspondent

THE AUTHOR with Sam Milby

I NEVER SAID THAT I LOVE you," are the words made famous by JB, a character played by "Pinoy Big Brother" evictee Sam Milby in "Maging Sino Ka Man."

So famous that it has become my message alert tone.

Yeah, call me *baduy*, but keep that to yourself until Sam is out of the show-biz radar.

Days after Sam was booted out of the "Pinoy Big Brother" house, my friends and I spotted him in Starbucks in Makati. You could practically see my face light up when he walked past our table.

I blurted out a very girly "Oh my god, *si* Sam Milby!"

Just like any fan, I knew I had to take a photo of him. Luckily, the universe seemed to have conspired for our meeting, because my friend had brought a cam with her. But there was almost no chance for a photo-op because of the swarm of people wanting to take their slice of cam-whoring with my Sam.

I was still busy thinking of my spiel to use in approaching him when he and his friends got up from their seats and walked toward the stairs to leave. My heart thumped in desperation. It was a "now or never" situation.

I gathered all the courage I could muster, swallowed my pride and called out his name.

"Excuse me Sam. Sam... Sam!" My voice was so faint I couldn't even hear myself. That's how nervous I was. I thought I'd miss out on that life-changing moment, until one of them said: "Sam, they want to get a photo."

Like a slow-mo film, he smiled and walked toward our direction. Imagine my horror when I was the only person who stood beside him while my friends did nothing.

Glued to their chairs, they acted like I had contracted a virus. Probably just out of sympathy, one of them finally whipped out a camera and took our picture.

> You could practically see my face light up when Sam Milby walked past our table

I couldn't believe I just did that. I wanted to faint (with the hope that he'd catch me if I did!). I said thank you and we exchanged our good byes.

That was the start and the end of my "one-night-only" fantasy with Sam. Lesson learned: You can't always expect your friends' support especially if it involves a photo-op with a celebrity.

But I've forgiven them. I learned afterwards that they also wanted a photo with Sam, but they were just too embarrassed to ask for it. Another lesson learned (at least for them): Never take Kodak moments like that for granted or you forever lose the chance.

Who got the last laugh? Guess!

Send your fan stories and photos to Ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph.

New haven for techies

MOTOROLA RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE Motorola concept store in Digital Exchange, Glorietta 3.

Covered with white fabric, the Motorola concept store was unveiled when Motorola Philippines country manager Patrick Aronson literally slashed the stark cover with a MotoRAZR2, to finally reveal the flagship store.

"The Motorola concept store brings experience, service and sales to our customers in an environment of cutting-edge design and technology that only Motorola can offer," Aronson said.

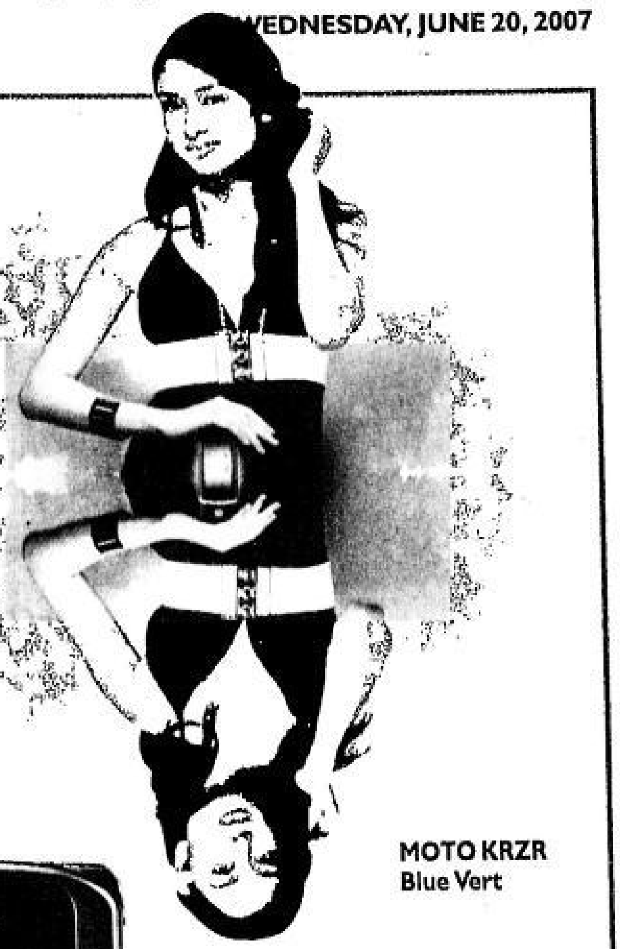
"It raises the total consumer experience to a new level, offering customers with heightened interaction. The after-sales service is more accessible as well, and we have a dedicated sales station and Moto Agents that cater to a customer's specific needs."

The Motorola concept store has a design that seeks to be innovative and stylish. The front and center of the store highlight the latest from Motorola: currently the sleek MotoKRZR K3, which is the 3.5G, as well as the MotoKRZR in all its fabulous colors: black, blue, red, silver and gold.

Upon entering the store, all eyes zoom in to the MotoConnect area, which showcases iconic phones such as the MotoKRZR, MotoKRZR K3, V3x, V3xx and V6 Maxx, as well as Bluetooth items and must-have accessories.

Past the MotoConnect area, customers can enjoy MotoMusic, which puts the spotlight on the MotoROKR series.

Further inside, one can learn more about the latest Motorola news and offers in an interactive setup that includes touch screens and promotional displays.



MOTO KRZR
Blue Vert

Taking centerstage is the MotoKRZR tie-up with fashion label Folded & Hung. The face of the campaign is Kelly Misa.

"I am in love with my red MotoKRZR! I love how sexy it is, stylish, features-packed and how I can put it in my smallest bag," Misa said.

Kelly and other fashionistas can now further personalize their style by matching their phones with their clothes, thanks to the Reflect Your KRZR Style promo, a nationwide promo until July 31, in all authorized Motorola dealers and stores and F&H shops.

Get as much as 40-percent discount from F&H when you buy your MotoKRZR K1 or K3 phone at authorized Motorola dealers and stores. Also visit any F&H store to get a chance to win a MotoKRZR K1.

You can also win more than P1 million worth of prizes when you take the online quiz at www.k3quiz.com.ph. Visit www.hellomoto.com/ph.

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- Quick Start & Joystick
- Card slot

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- 35x optical zoom
- DIGIC DV II Imaging Processor
- Dual Layer Recording
- True high-res 16:9 widescreen mode
- Quick Start, Easy Mode & Joystick
- Card slot

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- 10x optical zoom
- 2.7" (6.68 cm) LCD
- Dual Layer Recording
- DIGIC DV Imaging Processor
- True high-res 16:9 widescreen mode

DC22
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- 10x optical zoom
- Dual Layer Recording
- DIGIC DV Imaging Processor
- True high-res 16:9 widescreen mode
- Card slot

DC220 NEW
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- Dual Layer Recording
- DIGIC DV II Imaging Processor
- True high-res 16:9 widescreen mode
- Card slot

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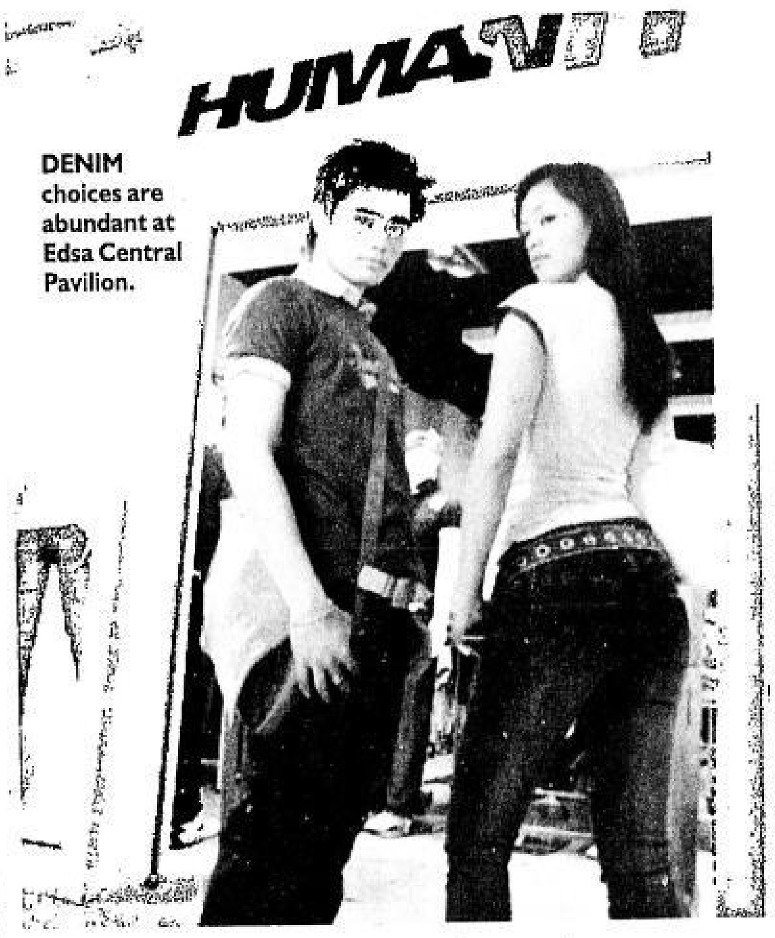

DENIM choices are abundant at Edsa Central Pavilion.

Denim explosion

THE CHOICES FOR THE RIGHT denim are endless, and they're all available at Edsa Central Pavilion.

This shopping and dining hub at the heart of the metropolis offers a huge selection of jeans, from basic cuts to stylishly designed pairs, that will surely suit any discriminating fashionista.

Skinny jeans are a throwback to the '80s that have made their way to 2007. Paired with an oversized blouse, chunky earrings and high-heel gold pumps, skinny jeans are great for showing gym-toned thighs and calves.

Meanwhile, fans of bootleg jeans and the timeless, relaxed cut need not despair because their favorite styles are here to stay. Bootlegs are flattering for curvy women while the relaxed, straight cut is ideal for those who go for the classic look.

Men will also delight in racks and racks of denims, be it low-rise, straight-cut or sandblasted.

Edsa Central houses some of the coolest boutiques in the country. Human, for one, has unveiled its new denim line called "Human Genes." A mix of the old and new, Human Genes is where funky meets sophisticated—perfect for students and yuppies. There's also RRJ's line of streetwear and Wrangler's European-inspired denims from the "W-Rivet" collection.

Other boutiques that carry hip and hot denim wear include Style Station, Kabaro, Body Brix, Oh! Lala!, Margelle, Freeway, Page: Xclusive, IFU, Penshoppe, Jag, Lee, Dickies USA and Rusty Lopez.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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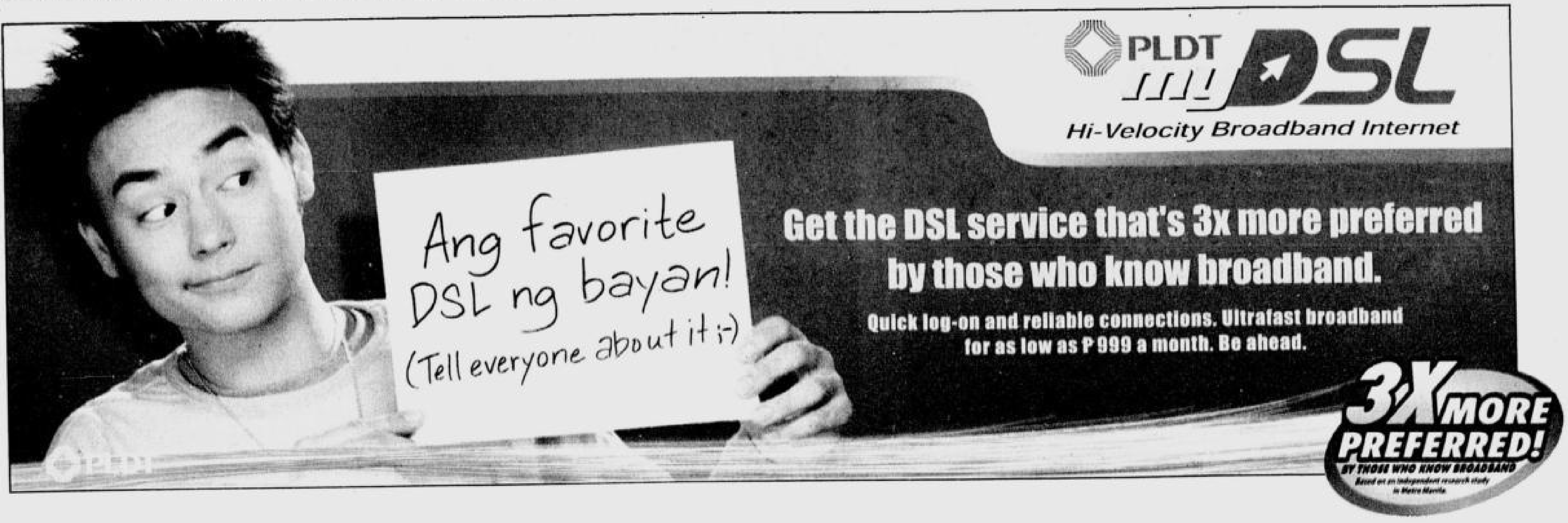

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Based on an independent research study in Metro Manila.

Judy Ann turns 20... in show biz

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

JUDY ANN SANTOS CELEBRATED her 20th anniversary in show biz with the people who touched her heart the most.

Along with family, friends, fans and colleagues, members of an Aeta community in Bataan were present at her "Bida ng Buhay Ko" concert at the Araneta Coliseum on Saturday night.

Juday has adopted the Aetas through her Touch a Heart Foundation, which helps the poor, battered women and sexually abused children.

A few days before the show, the actress visited the community to personally hand over school supplies. She also helped provide them clean drinking water by putting a good water system in place.

"*Yun lang muna ang nakayanan ko*," a teary-eyed Juday said. "But I promised the kids I would give them a better life."

A heartwarming video of her visit in Bataan was shown during the concert.

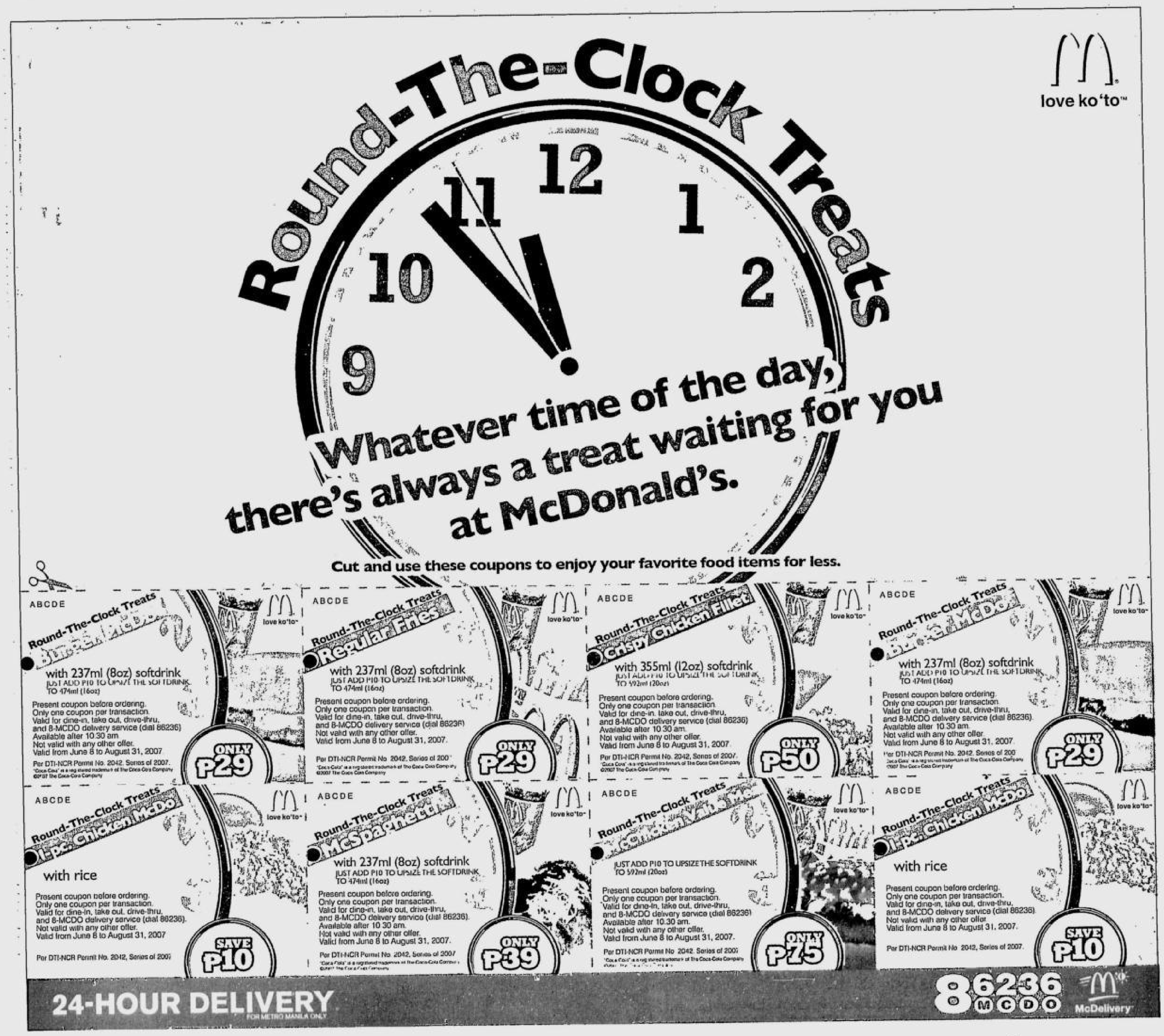
"Bida ng Buhay Ko" featured milestones in Juday's 20-year career, showcasing her most successful movies and TV series as well as awards and distinctions. An exhibit of her photos, plaques and trophies was mounted at the Big Dome lobby.

Fans, some coming all the way from Baguio and Leyte, were there to show their support.

Among the highlights of the show were personal greetings from Juday's on-screen mothers, fathers and leading men and ABS-CBN stars' production number, featuring the theme songs of some of her most memorable

JUDY/ E3

JUDY Ann Santos shares the stage with Mommy Carol and boyfriend Ryan Agoncillo during her anniversary concert at the Big Dome. RODEL ROTONI



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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST JUNE 11, 12 AND 13, WE TUNED IN TO Channel 2 early in the morning to catch the first three telecasts of ABS-CBN's new waker-upper show, "Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas." We wanted to know why the show's new configuration of features and hosts was deemed to be an improvement over the previous morning program. Our initial findings:

The first telecast was too hectic and hysterical, with the new mix of hosts trying too hard to keep the show "lively" and "exciting." Down, people! Early in the morning, viewers need, not pyrotechnics, but a warm, easy reintroduction to the workday.

We also get more than our fill of silly show biz gossip, self-conscious hosts who kept saying "*ayan*" after reading a spiel, stridently breathless restaurant and market reports, etc.

The news component of the revised program was similarly questionable, especially when it came to foreign reports. Most of them were of the "novelty" or "weird" variety, clearly intended more for entertainment effect, rather than factual information.

This is a gross disservice to viewers, who need to keep abreast of *real* international developments, especially in this age of globalization. Fun's fun, but there's got to be more to morning television than *this*.

The following day, the show's focus was on Independence Day activities in four key places, and we admired the program's ability to cover those events simultaneously on split-screen.

In general, however, we found the coverage too passive, with annotators having to kill time with shallow patter while waiting for some events to commence.

The show should have had more pre-taped features on hand to make those slow and low moments more eventful.

Too predictable

There was also a tendency to "obediently" follow the official schedule of Independence Day activities, resulting in predictability and tedium.

We wish our TV people would be more creative and proactive, and go beyond the "usual" and "standard" official coverage that's become the boring bane of the local small screen.

The third morning we caught the show, it was back to business as usual in the studio. Thankfully, the hosts' first-day hysteria had settled down to a more agreeable cheerfulness.

However, the show biz gossip was every bit as silly as before—and there was a lot of "padding," too, in the form of facile references to other media outlets' reports. Surely, the show's viewers would expect it to generate its *own* fresh reports, instead of quoting old "news" and gossip.

Quite a number of the hosts of the reformatted show are new, so it would be good if they could be identified by occasional captioning during the program's first month of telecasts. Indeed, some of the new hosts lack definitive personality and temperament that would distinguish them from the other hosts.

When all of the studio-based on-cam personalities are seated together, they are too numerous for viewers to keep separate track of. Quantity isn't quality, obviously.

Feedback

From **Loi Landicho** of Makati City: "Nope, **Tito Sotto** did not run as an independent candidate as you have written. He was part of the administration-backed Team Unity. Yes, Sotto may still be popular but the voting public could have been turned off by his decision to abandon friends in the opposition to join the administration candidates.

"But we cannot really fault him for making that move. Prior to the announcement of the opposition's senatorial slate, rumors had it that he wouldn't be drafted.

"Here's a piece of trivia: Sotto topped the 1992 senatorial elections—but he wasn't in the top 24 in the province of Batanes. The reason given by political analysts: TV reception for 'Eat Bulaga' was too weak in the country's northwest islands!"

* * *

From **Julius R. Regner** of Makati City: "I am interested in reading about what big stars of the '50s and '60s are doing now, an evaluation of the most promising young stars today, Boob-Tube Booboos and tips on how I can get copies of Filipino film classics …"

NUT: On those film classics, the Cinema One channel shows them from time to time, and LVN is reported to be coming out with a package of **Mike de Leon** films. A **Lino Brocka** compilation has also been announced.

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From scandal subjects to self-help gurus

By the INQUIRER Entertainment Staff

RUSHES

AS READ BY HER MANAGER **BOY ABUNDA** on "The Buzz," beleaguered beauty **Gretchen Barretto**'s latest statement on the forbidden-kiss photo with **John Estrada** sounded like an excerpt from an Oprah Book Club selection.

Read and weep:

"Allow me to step back even further to observe. It is helpful for me to experience the pain and joy in solitude. It is in this time of solitude that I consider that there is something in life more powerful than we. Doing so can be difficult, but I dare. I've gone inward in a state of humility and surrender. And I ask the public to pardon my ways. The only way out of this hurt and shame is through it. I am certainly grieving my mistake. I have recognized that there is a God who has allowed me to experience unconditional love through **Tony**. The kind of love that embraces me while I weep."

Deepak Chopra may be in trouble. Controversies seem to have turned **Kris Aquino, Ruffa Gutierrez** and now, Gretchen, into self-help gurus.

GRETCHEN BARRETTO

Public vs private

Malacañang and Ruffa agree on one thing: Her separation from Turkish national **Yilmaz Bektas** is a "private matter."

Why then was Ruffa granted three police escorts by the Philippine National Police? Does this development make it a public matter ... more precisely, a concern-of-taxpayers matter? Not one of us in this section remember being consulted.

By the way, haven't Ruffa and Yilmaz kissed and made up, as of the last sunrise/sunset? Doesn't this make the escorts moot?

Speaking of taxes, whatever happened to the Gutierrezes' problem with the Bureau of Internal Revenue?

Battling Bektases, the movie

Don't say you weren't warned.

Reportedly in the works is a movie top-billed by mother-daughter tag team Ruffa and **Annabelle**, to be produced by Regal's **Lily Monteverde**.

People need not be surprised. (Stunned? We heard that.)

Annabelle was also slated to play mother to Ruffa, Gretchen, **Dawn Zulueta** and **Pops Fernandez** in the long-delayed Regal project "Desperadas" (local big-screen version of "Desperate Housewives"—Gretchen herself informed INQUIRER Entertainment last year).

Annabelle was said to have hemmed and hawed, probably seeking top peso for her movie comeback.

With the latest developments in the lives of Ruffa, Annabelle and Gretchen, isn't the title "Desperadas" a little too close to the core?

Remember the ban

If the Ruffa-Annabelle movie gets off the ground, will it be shown in Manila?

Remember the 1994 Manila Film Festival?

As a result of the trophy-switching in that awards show (Best Actress went to Ruffa and not to real winner **Aiko Melendez**; Best Actor to **Gabby Concepcion** and not to **Edu Manzano**), all future movies starring the scam protagonists were banned—for life—in Manila by then Mayor **Alfredo Lim** and the city council.

The ban was lifted by Lim's successor, **Lito Atienza**, in July 1998.

ANGEL LOCSIN PDI PHOTO

Fast forward to 2007. Guess who'll be back in the mayor's seat next month?

RUDY ESPERAS

NANCY CASTIGLIONE

Waiting for an apology

Actress **Cita Astals**, who was councilor at the time of the ban lift, recalls that the council required a "formal written" apology from Gutierrez.

"We never got it," Astals recounts. The ban was lifted, anyway.

Quest for 'Mari Mar'

GMA 7 has launched a search for the all-Filipino version of the Mexican telenovela, "Mari Mar."

For those born yesterday, or who just emerged from a cave, "Mari Mar," which top-billed **Thalia** (now Mrs. **Tommy Mottola**), started a craze for Latin American soap operas dubbed in Tagalog in the mid-1990s.

Angel Locsin reportedly turned down the Kapuso version. (She promptly denied this in the tabs—one of which pointed out, "*Paano niya aayawan, e hindi naman inalok sa kanya?*")

According to network insiders, pretty young talents from both GMA 7 and rival station ABS-CBN have auditioned for the plum role. A partial list includes **Sunshine Dizon, Jennylyn Mercado** and **Iza Calzado**.

Top of the talk shows

This is for rabid show biz scene watchers who may have missed these parts of "The Buzz" and

ERIK Santos and Rufa Mae Quinto

"Showbiz Central" as they battered (oops, that word again) their poor clickers on Sunday, incessantly surfing between the smokin' shows.

- Comedian **Ethel Booba** to the new girl that her ex-boyfriend **Alex Crisano** is dating: "*'Yong* sports car *ni* Alex, *sa akin 'yon ha? Di pa bayad 'yon!*"
- Actress and commercial model **Nancy Castiglione** announced she's "single" again after breaking up with **Brad Turvey**. (The girl was obviously hurting, *aw.*)
- Despite earlier rumors questioning his sexuality, we say singer **Erik Santos** handled like a true gentleman all intrigues concerning his girlfriend **Rufa Mae Quinto**. "I never confronted Mark (Bautista) about the [rumored dalliance with Rufa Mae]. *May tiwala ako sa* girlfriend *ko*," he said.
- After they spent three days in the very exclusive Amanpulo resort in Palawan last April, model-actor **Derek Ramsey** has invited his girlfriend, actress **Angelica Panganiban** to join him on his trip to Brazil in December. (*Bawal mag*-break until then *ha*?)
- "The Buzz" host Boy Abunda to Ruffa: "Do you still love Yilmaz?" Ruffa: "I don't love him, *sa ngayon*." (*Nakup. Abangan ...*)
- **Vhong Navarro** said he would acknowledge the child of model **Geraldine de la Cruz** only if a DNA test proved he is indeed the kid's father. "I won't spend for [the test]," he said, "but I'll pay for it if the result is positive."
- Angel Locsin on the rumor linking her to "Asian Treasures" co-star **Marvin Agustin**: "I'm not ready. *Kakagaling ko lang sa* breakup. If he's the one man for me [even if he has kids], why not?"

Top of the tabloids

Top show biz stories in local tabloids at the start of the week:

- **Ate Vi**, *tatakbong* president *sa* 2010?
- **Kris**, *may* existing contract *pa kay* **Belo**. Kris' endorsement deal officially ends in September 2007. (*Kaya ba* cry *si* Dok?)
- Kris *unti-unting binubura*! (Background: Kris is supposed to have left "The Buzz" for good because she "couldn't stand" co-hosts **Cristy Fermin** and **Jobert Sucaldito**. The latter's retort was, the feeling's absolutely mutual. Do the math.)
- **Claudine** (Barretto)*nalilito sa motibo ni* John *sa pag-iingat ng* kissing photo *nila ni* Gretchen *sa* cell phone.
- *Puwede bang kasuhan si* John?

ETHEL BOOBA on Monday, after a bar catfight, showing the police where she was hit with a shoe. JOAN BONDOC

- **Janice** (de Belen), *titigil muna sa pag-aaral.* (*Di dahil kay* John?)
- Jennylyn (Mercado) denies auditioning for "Mari Mar" role. (*Bakit naman?* **Lea Salonga** auditions for roles.)
- Jen and **Patrick** (Garcia), *nagkulong sa kuwarto?* (*Bakit kaya?*)
- **Mark** (Herras) *pagod na sa* issue *sa kanila ni* Jennylyn. (Those who care, raise your hands.)
- *Relasyon nina* Erik (Santos) *at* Rufa Mae (Quinto) *hindi umabot ng* one year.
- Rufa Mae *inabsuelto sina* Mark (Bautista) *at* **Say** (Alonso) *sa hiwalayan nila ni* Erik.
- *Milyonaryong guwapo, ipinalit ni* Rufa Mae *kay* Erik.
- Ruffa *at* Yilmaz, *nagkaiyakan sa kanilang hiwalayan.* (*Kami rin.*)
- Yilmaz *paiba-iba ng* statement. (He needs a translator, that's for sure. Somebody tell him what sorry means, quick!)
- **Alex** (de Rossi), enjoy *sa pagiging* single. (Those who care, raise your hands!)
- **Luis Alandy**: *Wala akong bading na* lover. (Where did that come from?)

VHONG NAVARRO

A vote for Rosie

LOS ANGELES—Comedian **Ellen DeGeneres** dominated the 34th annual Daytime Emmy Awards on Friday, winning awards for Best Talk Show and Best Host for the fourth consecutive year. But she said the combative **Rosie O'Donnell** should have been honored in her stead.

When she was declared Best Talk Show Host winner, beating O'Donnell and the other co-hosts of "The View," DeGeneres said the prize really belonged to O'Donnell, whose outspokenness shook up the program before she left this spring after a fight with a co-host and a failure to reach a new contract.

"This was the year she should have won," DeGeneres said. "I don't know who should replace her but I don't think it should be Paris Hilton. That would not work." *Reuters*

Like graduation

DETROIT—Kristen Bell acknowledges that it is tough to let go of Veronica Mars, the wisecracking teenage sleuth she portrayed for three seasons on the TV series of the same name.

Asked what she would miss most about the character, Bell did not hesitate: "Other than everything? It feels sort of like graduating high school. You really only recognize how special it was once it's gone away." *AP*

Judy Ann turns 20...

From page E1

films and TV shows.

Sending their greetings through a video presentation were Comedy King Dolphy, actresses Maricel Soriano, Nora Aunor, Vilma Santos and Sharon Cuneta, as well as film and TV directors Joey Reyes, Jerry Sineneng, Gilbert Perez, Trina Dayrit, Andoy Ranay, Erick Salud, Cathy Garcia, Jojo Saguin, Chito Roño and Joel Lamangan.

Juday performed an engaging sing-and-dance number a la Beyoncé Knowles at the beginning of the show while clad in a skimpy pair of shorts and tube top. She later changed into figure-hugging gowns by Paul Cabral and Randy Ortiz.

POKWANG portrays Juday's super hero character Krystala while Pooh impersonates Ryan.

A portion of the show was allotted to the promo of "Ysabella," her latest *teleserye* on the Kapamilya Network, which is scheduled to premiere on July 21. The series will also feature her real-life partner Ryan Agoncillo, who kept the concert going with co-hosts Phoemela Baranda and Bianca Gonzales and anchors Kris Aquino and Zsazsa Padilla.

Juday and Ryan regaled fans with their rendition of "No Ordinary Love."

A segment titled "Ulam: Ang Batang Kusina," dedicated to Judy Ann's love for cooking, featured comedians Malu de Guzman, Eugene Domingo, Candy Pangilinan, Pokwang, Pooh and Epi Quizon.

A production number recalling Juday's days as a recording artist was performed by Beth Tamayo, Mylene Dizon, Kaye Abad, Nikki Valdez, Wowee de Guzman, Spencer Reyes, Angelu de Leon, Bobby Andrews, Jao Mapa, Maja Salvador, John Wayne Sace and AJ Perez, with The G Force and Kukuz Dancers.

"The Buzz" main host Boy Abunda put Judy Ann and Ryan on the spot with his no-holds-barred questions about their plans of settling down. Boy also questioned Juday's mom, Carol, and Ryan's dad, Chito, about the couple.

"My dream is to live a peaceful life with Juday," Ryan said. "*Kaya ako kumakayod ng husto ngayon* is for her to be able to live the kind of life she wants. We're not too worried about the wedding, what we're worried about is the life *after* the wedding. We're preparing for it."

JUDY Ann's leading men TJ Trinidad, Albert Martinez and Luis Alandy

CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO

"NO Ordinary Love," the couple croons.

MYLENE Dizon and Nikki Valdez (partly hidden) in a number recalling Juday as recording artist

"I PROMISE to give them a better life," the actress says of the Aeta kids she adopted under her Touch a Heart Foundation. PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

GARY VALENCIANO

Pinoy classic rock reunion

SHOW TIME

THEY MADE THE BIG CLUBS IN Japan, Hong Kong, Korea and Thailand rock, as well as the lounges on cruise ships plying the major ports of the world.

Now the Pinoy bands from the '60s to the present will make music in La Union in January 2008 in the 6th International Bands and Musicians Reunion.

The reunion series was born after Ben Yanto from Indianapolis, Indiana started an Internet group of fellow musicians updating each other about bands and music.

The Internet group grew, spreading throughout the US and to Canada, London, Australia, Hong Kong and Manila. Thus was born www.pinoyclassicrock.com.

These days, most of them are still rocking, although as lawyers, doctors, dentists and engineers. They still play in garage bands and a few continue to take center stage to perform.

The bands will reunite in La Union at the San Juan Surf Camp, San Juan town on Jan. 25-26, 2008, with the help of the Department of Tourism.

Members of the organizing committee are Sonny Panis, Mel Orosa, Butch Sabater, Jun Lopez, Jing Warren, Atek Jacinto, Babes Tolentino, Bert Tuason, Willie Senoran, Eddie Pastrana, Peter Teodoro, Ernie Santiago, Emil Panis, Charlie Meehleib, Manny Tagalog and Ben Yanto.

For details, e-mail info@pinoyclassicrock.com or fax 426-52-34.

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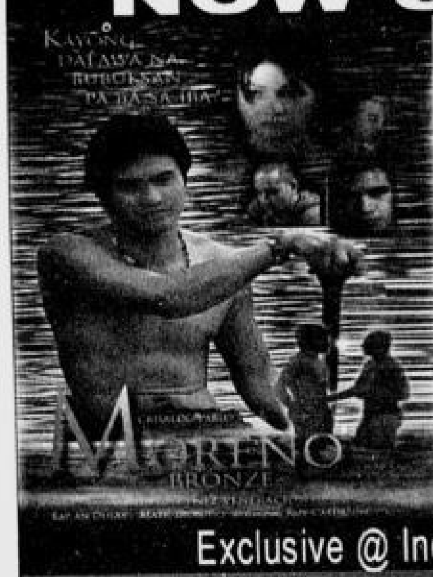
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1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 SILIP

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 SILIP
2 FANTASTIC FOUR

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 PREMONITION
2 PLEASE CALL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 FRACTURE
2 PLEASE CALL
3 SILIP
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 INVISIBLE
2 SILIP
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 FRACTURE
5 28 WEEKS LATER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 ANGELS
2 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 LIGAYA KATUMBAS AY BUHAY
2 PLEASE CALL

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Ringo Starr goes digital

LOS ANGELES—Ex-Beatle Ringo Starr has signed a deal to release his Capitol/EMI catalog as downloads on the Internet, including his hit 1970 album "Beaucoups of Blues" and "Ringo" from 1973, his publicist said in a statement Sunday.

CHEER FACTOR

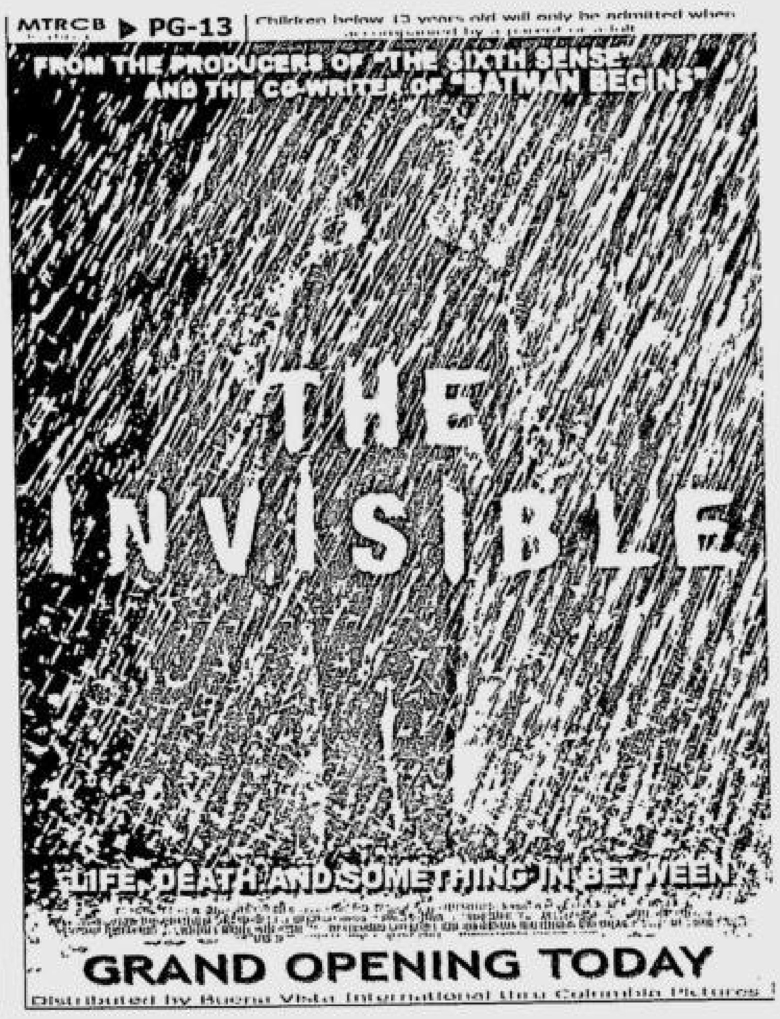
The downloads will be available Aug. 28, along with a compilation album, "Photograph: The Very Best of Ringo Starr." The best-of collection, with tracks like "It Don't Come Easy" and "Sentimental Journey," will also be released on CD and as a collector's edition CD/DVD package featuring a film and video clips.

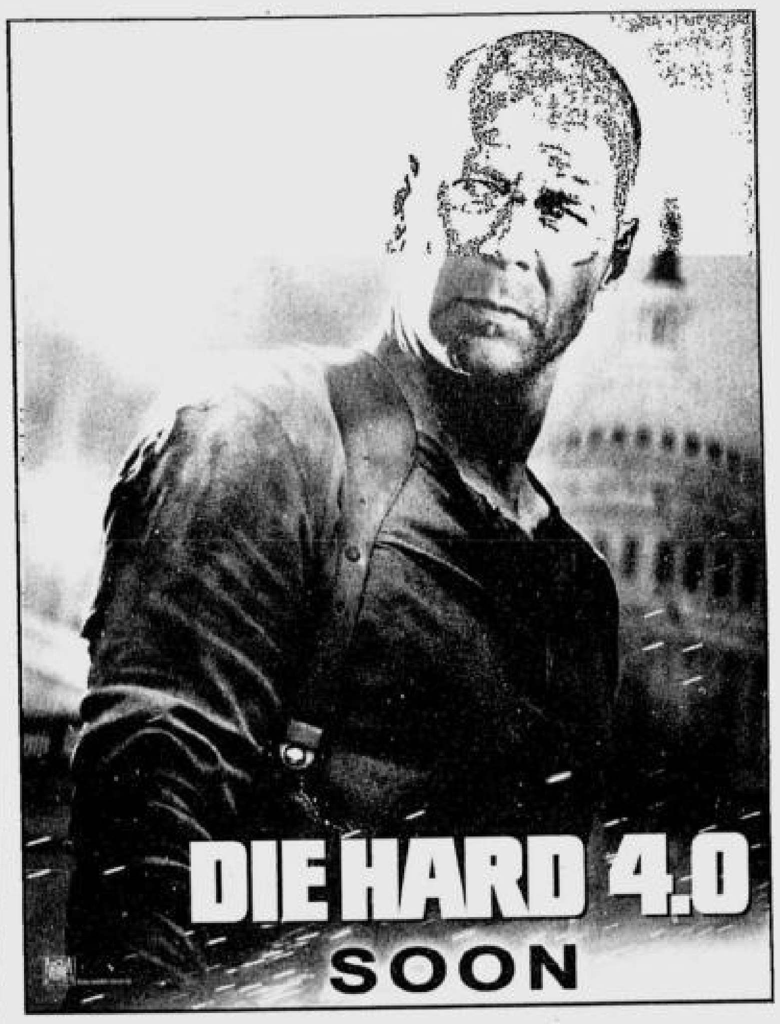
Six Ringo Starr ringtones will also be offered.

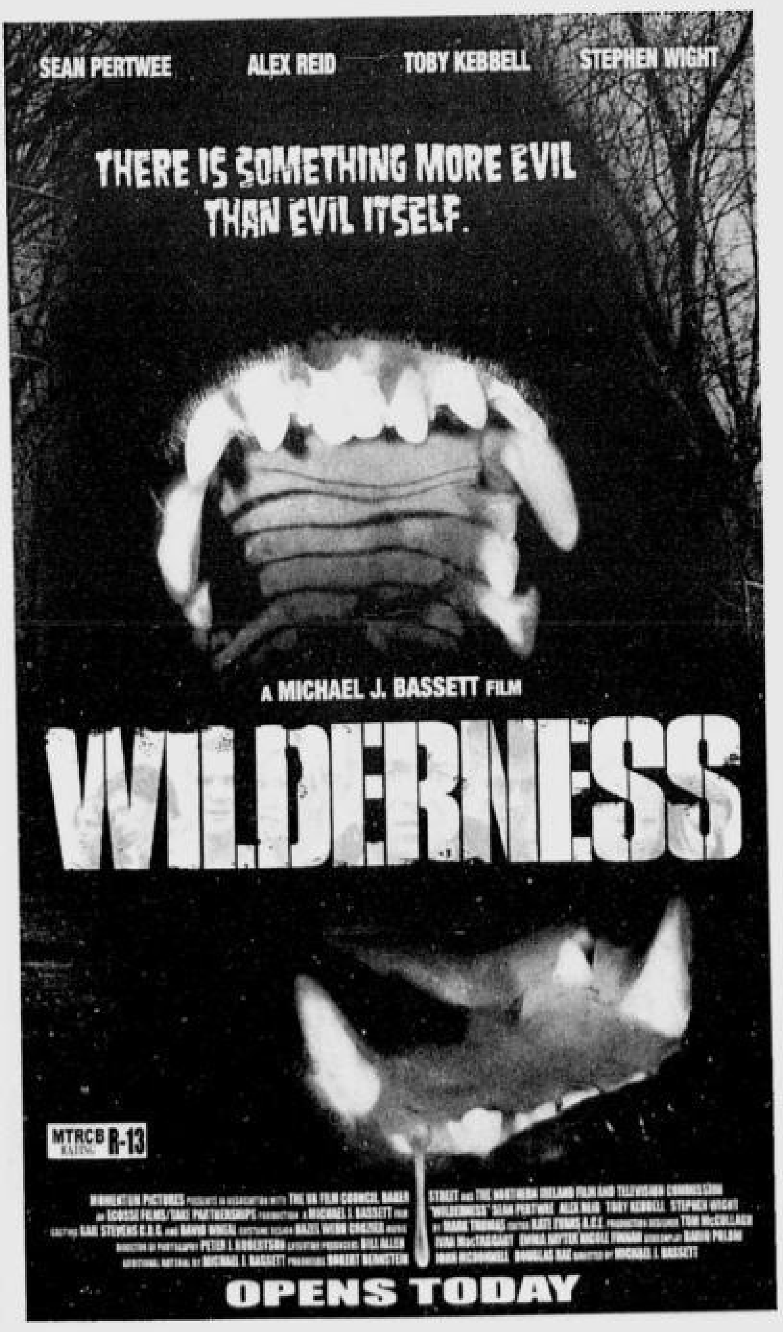
A solo album, called "Liverpool 8," is planned for a January 2008 release.

Starr's first solo recording contract after the Beatles broke up was with Capitol/EMI, from 1970 to 1975. *AP*

MTRCB ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 years old will only be admitted when accompanied by a parent or adult


FROM THE PRODUCERS OF "THE SIXTH SENSE" AND THE CO-WRITER OF "BATMAN BEGINS"
THE INVISIBLE
LIFE, DEATH AND SOMETHING IN BETWEEN
GRAND OPENING TODAY
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

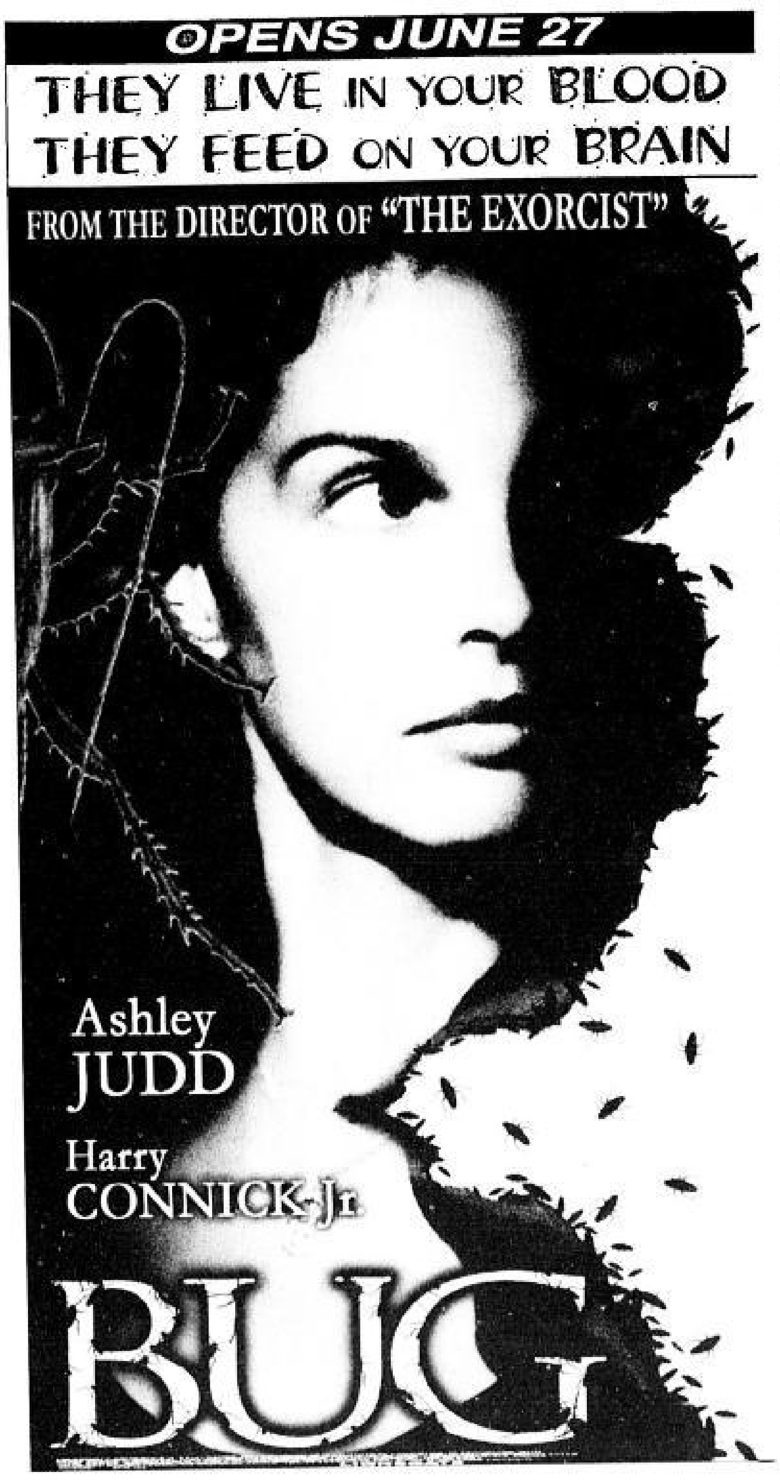




OPENING TODAY

From page E6

A gang of juvenile delinquents is stranded on a desert island as punishment. Before anyone can say "slasher pic," the kids are hunted down by a serial killer. Anton Bitel of Channel 4 Film complains that "it's a feeble ripple in the new wave of British horror … a pedestrian spin on 'Lord of the Flies.'" Matthew Turner of ViewLondon.co.uk opines that it "has high gore factor and genuinely nasty scenes [and it's] interesting for the games it plays with the audience's sympathies."


OPENS JUNE 27
THEY LIVE IN YOUR BLOOD
THEY FEED ON YOUR BRAIN
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "THE EXORCIST"
Ashley JUDD
Harry CONNICK Jr.
BUG

POWER PLANT CINEMA

ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41

DOLBY DIGITAL

OCEAN'S THIRTEEN PG13	NEXT PG13	INVISIBLE PG13
FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER G	FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER G	FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER G

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHANG CINEPLEX

① FANTASTIC FOUR - RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER (GP) 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30

② NEXT MTRCB PG-13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

③ FANTASTIC FOUR - RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER (GP) 1:00, 3:15

④ INVISIBLE MTRCB PG-13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE — FANTASTIC FOUR RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

"EIGA SAI 2007 JAPANESE CONTEMPORARY FILMS"

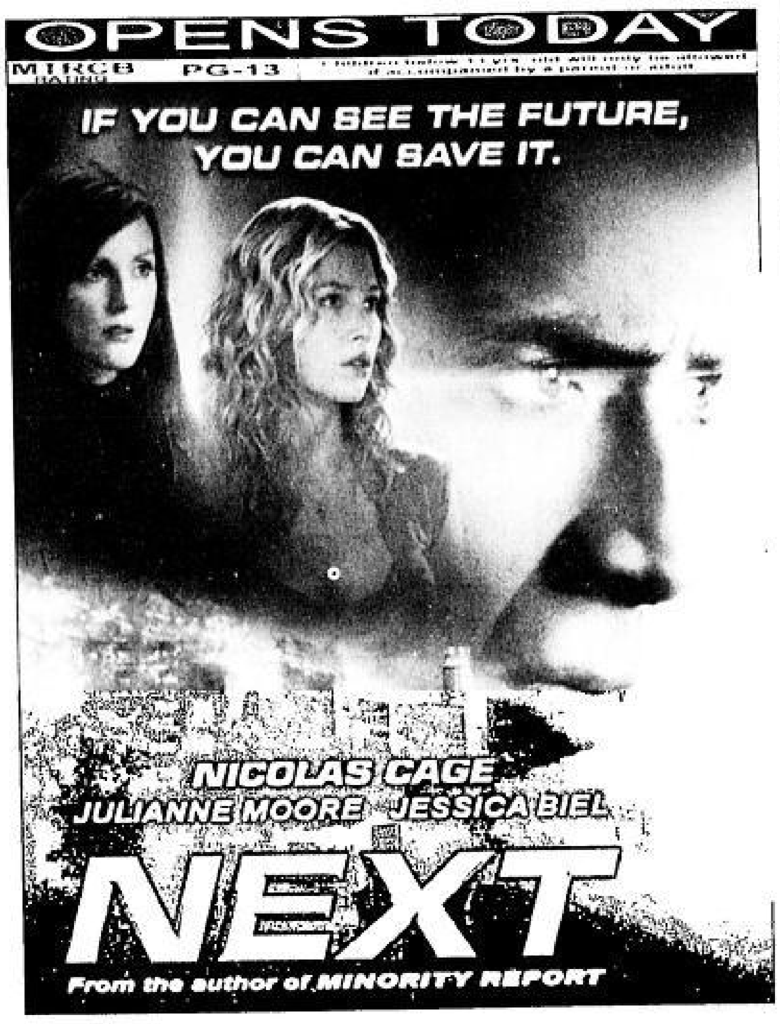
June 21 (Thursday)		June 22 (Friday)	
Shangri-la	2:00PM	Hotel Hibiscus	2:00PM
Blue Spring	5:00PM	Inochi	5:00PM
Out of this world	8:00PM	No One's ARk	8:00PM

Japanese Contemporary Films are still subject to MTRCB Ratings

Tickets to "TRANSFORMERS" now available!
Showing on June 28, 2007 (Thursday)

6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227
for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza


OPENS TODAY
MTRCB RATING PG-13
IF YOU CAN SEE THE FUTURE, YOU CAN SAVE IT.
NICOLAS CAGE
JULIANNE MOORE JESSICA BIEL
NEXT
From the author of MINORITY REPORT

NOW SHOWING!
MTRCB PG-13
"THE THIRD TIME IS A CHARM"
- Manohla Dargis, NEY YORK TIMES
"SUPER COOL AND SUPER CLEVER!"
- David Ansen, NEWSWEEK
"OCEAN'S THIRTEEN IS THE FIRST SEQUEL OF THE SUMMER OF 2007 NOT TO FALL ON ITS FACE."
- James Berardinelli, REELVIEWS
"IT'S A WINNER AS ONE OF THIS SUMMER'S GUILTIEST PLEASURES."
- Susan Granger,
GEORGE CLOONEY / BRAD PITT / MATT DAMON / ANDY GARCIA
DON CHEADLE / BERNIE MAC / ELLEN BARKIN AND AL PACINO
OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENTS

glorietta · GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MARKET! MARKET! · Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification please call 729 7777

THX

Cinema	Screen	Film
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	THE INVISIBLE
	2	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	3	NEXT
	4	ANGELS
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	NEXT
	2	THE INVISIBLE
	3 THX	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	ANGELS
	5	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END
	6	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	7	OCEAN'S 13
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	NEXT
	2	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	THE INVISIBLE GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	NEXT GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS
	2	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	3	NEXT
	4	THE INVISIBLE
	5	OCEAN'S 13
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	2	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	3	THE CONDEMNED
	4	ZODIAC
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	2	FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
	3	NEXT
	4	THE INVISIBLE
	5	ANGELS

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness June 13 to July 1, 2007	Ansons Emporium Exhibit June 11 to 28, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Maria Flordeluna Mall Tour June 15, 2007	Bazaar! Bazaar! Men's Fair June 4 to 15, 2007

GREENBELT — Ballet Philippine's Show
June 15, 2007 at the GB 3 Park

Greenbelt Onstage — ONSTAGE - The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & coporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007
For bookings, pls. call 752-7862 or 757-3861

Ayala MUSEUM — Embroidered Mutilpies: 18th - 19th Century Philippine Costume fr. The Museum Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology), The Netherlands June 4 to July 1, 2007
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Ayala CINEMAS
FOUR TIMES THE ACTION
FOUR TIMES THE ADVENTURE
FOUR TIMES THE UNIQUE CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE
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MTRCB Rating: General Audience (G)
MARVEL
glorietta GREENBELT TOWN TriNoma

SONY BMG MALL SHOWS

Catch today's hottest bands as they perform their latest hits.

TriNoma · June 16
6 Cyclemind
"Home"
Activity Center, 6pm

Market! Market! · June 22
Cueshé
"Back To Me"
Activity Center, 5pm

Pavilion Mall · June 30
Craeons
"Non-Toxic"
Bridgeway, 5pm

SONY BMG
MARKET! MARKET!
TriNoma
PAVILION mall

OPENING TODAY

Angels

Stars Angel Locsin, Marvin Agustin, Jennylyn Mercado, Patrick Garcia

Directed by Gina Alajar, Dingdong Dantes, Mark Reyes

Produced by GMA 7 star Angel Locsin and her manager Becky Aguila, this trilogy relates how "angels"—both the heavenly and earth-bound varieties—affect the lives of troubled individuals. A cherubim, who wants to win a silver medal in heaven, plays matchmaker to a repressed classical musician (Garcia) and a carefree rocker (Mercado). A hard-boiled police reporter (Locsin) softens up after gaining custody of her late *yaya*'s daughter. A bitter widower (Agustin) receives a lesson on forgiveness—and learns to accept his raped wife's son.

Moreno

Stars Ynez Veneracion, Ray-An Dulay, JV Roxas, Mark Dionisio

Directed by Cris Pablo

Pablo recounts that he shot this digital film in exotic Lake Sebu in South Cotabato. "I was shooting a documentary on tribal women in Mindanao and, to save money, I decided to do a feature film on the side." The resulting movie is "a dark tale that dares to unravel the mystery of Pinoy infidelity." Pablo points out: "It's about letting go of personal biases and being open to the complexities and diversity of human love." Exclusively in IndieSine Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Place Ermita.

"THE INVISIBLE"

The Invisible

Stars Justin Chatwin, Margarita Levieva, Marcia Gay Harden, Alex O'Loughlin

Directed by David S. Goyer

A high-school senior (Chatwin) is accidentally killed and his spirit lingers on earth as his mother (Harden) and the police search for his body. Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly describes it as "'The Sixth Sense' set in high school … but there's no mystery." Peter Debruge of Variety complains that it "plays like a very special episode of 'The OC' … [it] looks like a paycheck project." Alex Masterson of E! Online differs, though: "[It's] a surprisingly understated supernatural thriller … a cut above the usual [teen-movie] claptrap. It has an engrossing deliberateness to it."

Next

Stars Nicolas Cage, Julianne Moore, Jessica Biel, Jim Beaver

Directed by Lee Tamahori

Based on a Philip K. Dick sci-fi short story "The Golden Man," this flick casts a second-rate Las Vegas magician (Cage) as hero. Since he can foresee two minutes into the future, he is forced to battle terrorists who are planting a bomb in the city. Lou Lumenick of New York Post dismisses it as "brainless … makes 'National Treasure' look like a model of narrative logic. It's the worst Dick adaptation since the Ben Affleck disaster 'The Paycheck.'" Claudia Puig of USA Today agrees: "[It's an] implausible action thriller." Jan Stuart of Newsday thinks it's "preposterous [but] diverting."

Wilderness

Stars Sean Pertwee, Alex Reid, Toby Kebbell, Stephen Wight

Directed by Michael J. Bassett

OPENING/ E5

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aranetacenter.net
Gateway Ali MALL FarmersPlaza
gatewaymall.com.ph
Gateway Cineplex*10
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EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE
FANTASTIC 4: SILVER SURFER 1:00 / 1:55 / 3:10 / 4:05 5:20 / 6:15 / 7:30 / 8:25 / 10:00
THE INVISIBLE 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30
WILDERNESS 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:40
NEXT 1:30 / 3:35 / 5:40 / 7:45 / 9:50
OCEAN'S 13 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50
Platinum Cinema
ANGELS 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:05 / 3:20 / 6:35 / 9:50
FANTASTIC 4: SILVER SURFER 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
Ali MALL 5
1 NEXT 12:25 / 2:30 / 4:35 / 6:40 / 8:45
2 THE INVISIBLE 1:15 / 3:45 / 6:15 / 8:45
3 FANTASTIC 4: SILVER SURFER 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30
4 ANGELS 12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20
5 WILDERNESS 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph
ARANETA COLISEUM
www.aranetacoliseum.com
June 20 - Wed PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
4:35 Talk N Text vs Red Bull 7:20 San Miguel vs Alaska
NCAA OPENING CEREMONIES
June 23, Saturday 12nn

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MTRCB Rating ➤ GP
Angels
ANGEL OF MINE
ANGEL LOCSIN
AIZA MARQUEZ KETCHUP EUSEBIO PINKY AMADOR MALOU DE GUZMAN
MALOU CRISOLOGO KATRINA & BIANCA AGUILA
INTRODUCING EUNICE "CHARMING" LAGUSAD
GINA ALAJAR
DADDY'S ANGEL
MARVIN AGUSTIN
MS. JACLYN JOSE AND VALERIE CONCEPCION
DOMINIC OCHOA PAOLO PARAISO GERARD PIZARRAS
CARLO GONZALES ANGELA ANTONIO JOSEPH MARCELO
NICO ANTONIO ERIC ELEAZAR & NASH AGUAS
JOSE DANTES III
ANGEL OF LOVE
JENNYLYN MERCADO PATRICK GARCIA
MS. BOOTS ANSON ROA EMPRES SCHUCK CHESKA INIGO
ALLAN PAULE KAREL MARQUEZ MARCO ALCARAZ
POPOY BARDOS MARTIN DELOS SANTOS BIANCA PULMANO
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TRANSFORMERS
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Solar Entertainment Corporation
IN THEATERS JUNE 28